ARNOLD BENNETT'S LETTERS
TO HIS NEPHEW

ARNOLD BENNETT

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ARNOLD BENNETT'S LETTERS TO HIS NEPHEW, With a Preface by Frank Swinnerton

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PREFACE

A MAN who knew Arnold Bennett very well once asked me whether I thought any of his readers ever realised, as we did, the extraordinary charm of his personality. I replied that I was sure no reader had any conception of it. I was thinking of the difference which had been made in my own opinion by acquaintance with him; but as I have since then read many comments upon Bennett which seem to me to be almost perversely untrue I am confirmed in this belief. Really to appreciate this most lovable human being, one had to forget all about his reputation.

When first I met him, the date and place were of his own appointment. I was a very young man. Except as a publisher's assistant, I knew no other authors. But he had read two novels which I had written, thought much more highly of them than I did, and had already resolved that he would keep an eye upon me. This point is interesting, I think, not because it has any relation to myself, but because it illustrates a habit of Bennett's. He had a tremendous capacity for making himself responsible for the fortunes of others.

I must admit that my first contact with him caused me great embarrassment. We met at the Authors' Club; and by some mischance a well-known woman novelist had mis-read a date and a few moments previously had arrived a week early for lunch. Before speaking to Bennett, whom I did not then know at all, I had reluctantly to listen to the dismissal of this woman novelist. He seemed to me to be appallingly harsh, blunt, assertive. My sympathy was entirely with the person who had made the mistake. And when, finally, she had gone to her lonely meal, and I was the accepted guest, both Bennett and I were so troubled that it took us some time to grow calm. "She's wrong," he said. I said: "I could have come another day." He said: "Not at all. She is to meet my wife, who's away. Besides, my letter was clear. She's a very decent sort. But . . . she's wrong." Gloom settled upon us.

Within five minutes we were upset again. Bennett all his life had a confusing habit of using the word "he." It took the place of all sorts of proper names, sometimes as many as three in two minutes. I recall having on a later occasion to be very brisk indeed in discovering that "he" meant, successively, Mr. George Doran, the American publisher, Mr. Lloyd George, and Lord Beaverbrook. At this first meeting, I was engaged in some already rather crumbling remarks on the subject of Thomas Hardy when I was petrified by a shout: "Here, I say, who are you talking about? I'm talking about George Meredith." Horror paralysed my tongue. I thought: "Oh, gosh, this is going to be dreadful!"

It was not at all dreadful, as it happened. Our only other difference arose over a question of the degree of my talent. Like other sensitive people, I am arrogant when this is belittled: before encomium I was, and always shall be, brusquely unreceptive. At this highly experimental lunch I went so far as very decidedly to shake my head. Bennett scowled at me. He was to all appearance violently incensed. He said with the greatest firmness and ferocity: "*I'm* making no mistake." Hastily recognising invincible error, I changed the subject. If I had known him better I should have winked.

From that first meeting I took away some definite impressions of a man whose two great novels I admired beyond any other contemporary fiction. He was just forty-four; I just twenty-six. He was self-assured, inclined to be speechless and, with his stammer (which took the form of apparently endless determination to get the word he had intended using), a difficult talker. He did not ask questions, but obtained information by means of measuring glances. He was very kind. He held himself very erect and his shoulders very rigid, so that his body had no natural swing as he walked, but rather swayed stiffly from side to side. He walked slowly and with great seriousness. When he discovered that I had read Herbert Spencer's "Study of Sociology," his comment, with the flat Midland "a," was "It's like a bath." I liked him very much, but did not think I should ever be comfortable in his company. For one thing, the examining directness of his mind disconcerted the evasiveness of mine. For another, I was unused to emphatic praise,

and even in the midst of elation I went so far as to discover a first weakness in my celebrated host: he was either a flatterer or a less perspicacious fellow than I had believed.

This preface is not to be an account of my friendship with Arnold Bennett, and I hope it will not be mistaken for a display of egotism. But I must mention here one other matter which I feel sure settled for ever in his mind a belief that I was an exceptional being. Having mistakenly formed, three years later, the view that I must be a yachtsman, he invited me to spend a week-end on his barge-built yacht, the *Velsa*. We sailed from Westminster Bridge on a Saturday afternoon, and spent the night at, I think, Holehaven. There were two exceedingly small cabins on this yacht, so near one another that it was possible still to converse when both of us were tucked up in our bunks. Bennett called out: "Do you know what I'm reading?" I did not. He announced: "The P-O-S-E-ssed . . . Dostoevsky. . . . It's marvellous!" A mumble from me. Then: "I've got another book here" (naming the book). I asked why. He said: "I read a review of it in the ——— by a man who seemed to know what he was talking about. Have you read it, I say?" "Yes," said I; and, with mounting heart but after a further modest struggle: "I wrote that review." There was a silence. Through the darkness, as I now realise, there must have come waves of proud benevolence as Bennett thought to himself: "Oh, but *I've* made no mistake. This chap . . . is *all right*."

That was the beginning of a considerable intimacy between us. It was a little one-sided at first (as Bennett has proclaimed) because I was living at home with my mother, who was physically immovable, and I was very poor, inexperienced, and self-distrustful. But Bennett knew all this, and insisted upon treating me as an equal. He wrote one day: "When will you realise that I am not 'Mr. Bennett,' but Yours ever, A. B.?" As often as he could persuade me to come he invited me to his house at Thorpe-le-Soken. There, one day, I met E. A. Rickards, the architect, who at the time, and until his death in 1920, was Bennett's best friend. We all went walking together along the sands at Frinton. Bennett said: "John Sargent is . . . second-rate." Rickards, equally definite, and by no means

afraid of Bennett, said: "He's first rate." The two remarks were repeated. We walked on. My companions were not quarrelling: each appeared to be detachedly stating an incontestable fact. I had never met with such calm certitude. I said: "I want to know this. You say Sargent is second-rate; Rickards says he is first-rate. What happens *then?*" Bennett looked sideways. He smiled. "Rickards is wrong, of course," he blandly explained. That was what I had supposed.

Well, it may be said that this only establishes Bennett's unpleasant dogmatism, just as the story about his being impressed at finding me the writer of a competent review shows his readiness to gape at a marvel. I do not agree. The truth of Bennett's opinion of Sargent would not now be contested; and any acquaintance with our leading critical journals then and now will show that the writing of competent criticism of new books is unusual. Moreover, Bennett never did or said anything which was not filled and made delightful by his strong, sane, and nonsensical humour. That humour, which gave to "The Card" and "Buried Alive" their distinction, was unsleeping. It saved him at all times from any over-estimate of his own gifts. He was never solemn, never self-important. When he said: "Rickards is wrong, of course," Rickards, the most explosively sensitive man I ever met, made no reply at all; for he knew as well as I did that the discussion had reached the ridiculous and would stay there, whatever he said. He was no fool.

Possession of such a sense of the ridiculous is now out of date. It causes a man to laugh at, to love, and to cherish his fellow-creatures; whom he regards as hopeless idiots, perhaps, but very innocent and well-intentioned idiots, struggling to do right, and failing through congenital and excusable imperfection. It does not permit any feeling of superiority to the rest of mankind. Bennett, although he may have doubted their wisdom, had no feeling of superiority to others. His impulse was to help all. That impulse landed him in a thousand difficulties, and it may have killed him before he had any reason to expect death; but he had a rich, benevolent, and truly disinterested life, of which magnanimity was the keynote. The number of his beneficiaries was beyond computation; he gave his time, his interest, his care, and his money with a readiness

possible only to one of large mind and large heart. Marguerite Bennett tells one true story of his contemplation of an unfinished portrait of himself. "I don't care what they say," he remarked (the words were probably "what anybody says"); "I am a nice man." That was an understatement.

The directness of his mind, to which I have referred earlier, was disconcerting to the vain and the dishonest. It was equalled by the directness of his tongue. He would say: "You ought not to have done that"; or "The truth is . . . you're idle"; or "I don't think that joke is quite up to your usual high standard, Mister . . . Jones. . . Excuse me." It was his habit to say of one friend: "He's conceited." The man remarked once: "I know you say I'm conceited, Arnold." He answered, with his grave, benignant look: "We-ell, . . ." The pause seemed endless. Then: "You are." But he would also say: "That . . . article of yours. It . . . was excellent"; or "I am . . . delighted to see you. I was exceedingly bored. Now I'm not." The brevity of his speeches, very effective as it made them, was the result of his stammer. He would pause, crowd a few words together, pause again, and produce his usually unexpected last word. At the time it did not strike one as a mannerism; but it made his remarks often surprising. And although he was so outspoken I never knew him to be injudiciously free: those who received his candours were all such as could endure them with fortitude and even retort upon him, as they did. When so retorted upon, he relished a *riposte* as much as the rest of the company. Afterwards he would say: "I laffed like anything."

I always think his gaping love of the sumptuous has been much exaggerated by people who did not know him. They think that Bennett himself was Denry, "the Card." He was not. He enjoyed cardishness without disgust; it was easy for him (so he said) to invent the sayings and doings of cards. But there was a real model for Denry Machin, who was not at all like Bennett; and although Bennett had his idiosyncrasies they were personal to himself. I agree that Bennett appreciated the dramatically comic, and that in the matter of hotels and furnishings he was in the habit of saying, or rather of quoting: "The Best is good enough for me." On the other hand, the Continental and seaside hotels he stayed at—where he could

choose—were often enough good, shabby, and expensive, as unlike as possible to the gaudy teashops *de luxe* which he is supposed to have loved. What fascinated him about all these large hotels and restaurants was their organisation. He loved the extraordinary detail, the hidden intricacies of management, and, in chief, the astounding thought that every servant and dweller in the building was, like himself, a human being, with a secret life of his or her own. In other words, he was a novelist in the tradition of Balzac, but confronted with a much mechanised world, to which he conceived it to be his duty to act as recorder. He never, as far as I could see, cared for size for size's sake, or luxury for luxury's sake. His notion of a good hotel, he once told me, was one in which a reading lamp hung beside or over the bed. It was the admission of one who never slept well and who read much during wakeful nights.

This brings me to another matter, his celebrated interest in clothes. That, indeed, was intense; and when the Prince of Wales once asked him where he bought his shirts he was conscious of a subtle compliment far transcending any commendation of his work. A less acceptable remark was made by a firm of tailors, who candidly informed him that he was more trouble than he was worth. His shirt, his tie, the handkerchief which he wore so carefully in the outer breast pocket, were much considered. One of the few malicious inventions about him which I believe caused a wound was a pretence that he had been seen in the theatre with a pink dress shirt, which he would have abhorred. I remember that once, when he and I were both lunching with George Doran, I wore a new suit. He became rather grave when he saw me; and Mr. Doran remarked ironically upon the fact that he was in the company of the two best-dressed authors in London. Bennett said: "Yes, by Jove; if I'd known he would be . . . like this, I should have worn *my* new suit. I asked myself if I should; but I thought . . . we-ell, there'll only be *him* there; and so I didn't. It's a highly superior suit. Far better than his, which is fair. But then I go to a better tailor. I go t-to the best tailor in London." A pause. "In the world." Then, noticing that we were still insufficiently impressed, he added: "I do, really."

That was innocently boastful. I don't recall his ever boasting

about anything else. I always supposed that as a boy he had perhaps been forced by poverty to go shabby, and that this love of finery—his clothes were never loud, and yet their unction suggested expense rather than the perfectly fitting—was a survival of childhood and a recompense for times past. I cannot be sure of this. He once saw a four-and-elevenpenny straw hat in a shop window (there were probably hundreds of such hats in the window, with a big card drawing attention to the price), and screwed himself to the point of marching into the shop. When he asked for a straw hat, he was shown one at a guinea. "Haven't you," he asked timidly, "something a bit cheaper?" A hat at half a guinea was produced. "Haven't you," he began, faltered, and blurted out: "I . . . w-want one of the four-and-elevenpenny hats." Nobody who has not been very poor can weigh his triumph. It was not the price of the hat that mattered; it was the fact that he had had the courage to insist upon it.

Unfortunately the week-end (which H. W. Massingham and I were spending on his yacht, the *Marie Marguerite*) was stormy. We waited for the rain to slacken, and at last, as it held off awhile on the Sunday evening, determined to walk abroad in Dover. Arnold, of course, wore his oilskins, which were extremely striking. But at the last minute he hesitated. "Now shall I," he asked, "wear my yachting cap, or my new four-and-elevenpenny straw hat?" I said: "You couldn't possibly wear a straw hat with that rig." He answered, mildly. "Couldn't I? All right, guv. I . . . I thought it might be a little . . . m-more smart." But that was not the real reason. He wanted to wear it because he wanted to display his victory. The straw hat was no ordinary straw hat. It was a *panache*. I almost relented of my cruel conventionality.

Certainly the purchase of this cheap straw hat was not, as stupid persons would like to suggest, a meanness. Bennett was never mean. There were times when he could not bring himself to spend; but there was a sufficient reason for that. Once, when I complained to him that I had been skied at the Opera, he asked what I had paid for the seats. I said eighteen shillings each. He said: "It's not enough." I said: "Quite true. But somehow I couldn't bring myself to pay more." His reply

was: "Don't I know. Once poor, always poor; there are times when I can't make myself take a taxi." But for others he had no meanness; and indeed his attitude to money has been more painstakingly misrepresented than any other characteristic. He did not love money. Not penuriousness, but a tyranny of method, caused him to keep a note of every day's expenses. It amused him to exact high prices from newspaper proprietors, some of whom have always believed in paying well for contributions which they sought; but on the other hand his gratuitous contributions to small papers were many. He helped all sorts of causes and all sorts of individuals—often on his own initiative, and without request being made, sometimes generously on appeal. Any acquaintance who fell on evil days was relieved of anxiety; if an old friend died it was to Bennett that the widow always turned. One such friend, very ill, said to his wife: "If you're in any difficulty—ever—go to Arnold. He's the man." That was true. His gifts were never ostentatious; but they were ever-ready. He carried two or three blank cheques in his pocket book, for emergencies; and once, when I showed him (because I wanted his opinion on the wisdom of responding) an application on behalf of a defeated writer (no angel) whom he did not know, he said at once: "What shall you send? I'd like to send the same." Out came one of the cheques. That was a single instance. Always, it was: "That chap. He . . . has to be *helped*."

Those were the casual beneficiaries. There were many "regulars." Readers of the letters contained in the present book will realise that his nephew Richard was a "regular." Having until late in life no child of his own, he undertook the charge of his nephew's education, sent him to Oundle and to Cambridge University, and kept a paternal (rather than a casually avuncular) eye upon him through the following years. He took the job with great seriousness, gave advice as to conduct, warning as to pleasure, and even some strong counsel as to conversational deficiency. In such passages as these the strict notions of behaviour which governed his own deportment are revealed. He was as orderly as he wished Richard to become. He was as courteous towards a companion as any man could have been (I spent a month alone with him in Portugal in 1920,

and apart from the fact that in a crisis regarding hotel accommodation he was the first to feel ill and retire to bed I have no complaint to make). And he was as punctilious in the matter of appointments, promise-keeping, and other essentials as it is possible for man to be. As he approached a theatre he would look at his watch: "Hell! Too early again," he would say. He once told me that it was his ambition to arrive absolutely to time. "I never shall," he added. "I've been trying to do it all my life. I'm a-always too early."

So much for his sterner side. There are many instances in this book of the kinder aspect, to which I need not direct the attention of readers. But what I must emphasise is just that flow of fun and affection which runs all through the correspondence. Personally, I feel that jocularity (so often a sign that humour is lacking from a man's composition) loses a great deal when it is printed. The jokes, the allusions, miss fire when a stranger's eye is directed at them. The familiar tone is gone from the voice; the smile, the nonsensical gravity, the droll glance, the whole magic of a personality. In work intended for print, an adroit writer can supply an alternative personality, as has been done by many a celebrated charmer of the past. In letters, much goes from the writer to the recipient which another person cannot appreciate. It is impossible to take a reader by the arm and say: "Yes, ah, yes; you can hear him saying this," or: "Well, the explanation of that is just a habit Bennett had of abbreviation, of substitution—'magnif.' for 'magnificent'; 'Land and Fluid' for 'Land and Water'; 'Thank me' for 'Thank you,' and so on." It was trifling—a nothing, and was never laboured or overdone; but it is one trait, one occasional oddity, that contributes to memory of him. To explain is to weary, and never to create a living impression. All one can do is to speak of the writer as I have done, in the hope that some faint picture of him may be created by the reader's imagination. To add that he was a kind man, a humorist, generous, lovable, and disinterested is little enough, very lame, very trivial; it is worth noting only as a tribute of affection.

Finally, you will find some vanity in the letters; and according to your temperament you will feel superior to it or welcome it as a part of the man. Bennett's friends, certainly, will not wish

it away, because it will so remind them of him. Vanity, I should say, is an endearing characteristic; it is distinguished from egoism and egotism by the fact that, unlike those disagreeable selfishnesses, it implies a great concern with the good opinion and the amusement of others. Ill-nature you will not find, because Bennett had in him neither jealousy nor petty spite. Great curiosity; an absence of snobbery of any sort, but an enjoyment of what is called the social whirl; the abruptness which his writing often shared with his speech; a concern with life as a vivid scene and a tumultuous racket; and intense and protective benevolence towards his correspondent,—all these are here, once again as illustrations of that extraordinary personality which has not yet, for his associates, begun to lose vital warmth.

I hope these letters may for strangers have some echo of Arnold Bennett; for his friends they will have the curious and moving effect of obliterating time and bringing again into view the man who wrote them. These friends will see the stiff body, the brown eyes which at first looked tired and then were so cordial that they won the hearts of all children; and will hear the rather harsh voice which, when he was at ease and had no need to be emphatic lest the stammer checked him, became gentle and almost sweet. They will recall his not very graceful gestures, the good square brow, the smooth cheek-bones, the pugnacious chin and ugly teeth. Above all, they will feel, as they used to do, the old confidence in him, the reliance that he would never fail them as a friend, the old warm, amused, yet profoundly respectful affection, and such strength of memory as will outlast that of many more recent events and many lesser but more inflated men.

FRANK SWINNERTON

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

ARNOLD BENNETT wrote weekly letters to his nephew and adopted son, Richard Bennett, who has undertaken the task of editing and annotating extracts from the letters. The letters may be divided into three groups, those written to Richard while he was at school—Oundle (1916–1920), those written while he was at Cambridge (1920–1924), and those written since. Of the first group, written in the years 1916–1920, only a few remain; of the others the complete series has been preserved.

Throughout the letters A. B. continually refers to the writing of his books or the production of his plays. Certain references in the letters will be more easily understood if the following dates of publication or production are compared with the dates of the letters.

Books.		Plays.	
The Pretty Lady	1918		
The Roll Call	1919	Sacred & Profane Love	1919
The Log of the Velsa	1920		
Mr. Prohack	1922	The Love Match	1922
Lilian	1922	Body & Soul	1922
Riceyman Steps	1923		
		London Life	1924
Elsie and the Child	1925		
Lord Raingo	1926		
		Mr. Prohack	1927
The Strange Vanguard	1928		
The Savour of Life	1928	The Return Journey	1928
Mediterranean Scenes	1928		
Accident	1929		
Imperial Palace	1930		

Things that have interested me 1921, 1923, 1925

Early Letters—to 1919

Oundle

Education

"Sacred and Profane Love"

H. G. Wells's "History of the World"

Banking

Cambridge

ARNOLD BENNETT'S LETTERS TO HIS NEPHEW

[library stamp]

THE first letter I have preserved is that written by A. B. to tell me of the arrangements made for my entry to Oundle School.

Comarques, Thorpe le Soken, Essex. 31.7.16

Your letter was good. I showed it to H. G. Wells, who liked it. I also sent it to the Headmaster (F. W. Sanderson, M.A.) of Oundle School. I always thought well of this school. Wells's eldest boy (aged 15) is there, and his other boy has been waiting for a year for a place in the School House (there are several houses—350 boys—School House is the best). The Head wrote me that it was true that School House is full, but he will find room for you. I think you will like this school. Young Wells will put you up to the tricks of the trade. I think this is about all, except that I believe that your father and mother will be satisfied with the results of Oundle. I hope they will. Of course it will be up to you.

I was at Oundle for four years under F. W. Sanderson who, it will be remembered, died suddenly in London after making a speech. H. G. Wells was present at his death. "Wells's eldest boy" is, of course, G. P. Wells, joint author of "The Science of Life."

My second letter refers to the arrangements for the completion of my education. At this time, towards the end of the war, A. B. was at the Ministry of Information, with Lord Beaverbrook, and the remarks at the end of the letter describe briefly his work there.

80 *Piccadilly—The Royal Thames Yacht Club.* 14.10.18.

The general plan is this: that you leave school when you're just under or just over 18—preferably over, and that you then

go to Cambridge, and that during at least your first year at Cambridge you still continue your *general* education, without specialising. When you are 20 or nearly so, you can begin specialising. You see that up to now it has been impossible to formulate any plan as the war was so uncertain. The war is now practically over, and we can begin. As regards after University I suppose it is understood clearly between us that you want to go in for chemical engineering. This is about as far as we have got yet, or can get, I think. I doubt whether Captain Mason's place would be quite important enough for your vast potentialities! Of course you comprehend that the planning of your career is not to be a series of instructions laid down by me, but an equal collaboration between you and me. I should not dream of doing more than offering you advice. And your refusal of my advice would not make the slightest difference between us. Such is my notion. (My duties here, broadly, consist in keeping the public opinion of all countries in the world (except enemy) as favourable as poss. to Great Britain. This is done by means of wireless, cables, articles, books, agents, and inviting foreigners to England and sending Britons abroad. The organisation is vast. I am the head of it.)

Thy distracted uncle.

The new war situation involves me in a whole series of new activities.

From August 1919 the letters have all been preserved and I have made suitable extracts from them.

29.8.19.

Dear Mr. Richard Bennett,

I am obliged for your letter and the news it contains, which is distinctly good. I doubt not that you are working regularly for the school, but I am not quite so sure about the piano work. I much fear that you will not be invited to Liverpool. "Judith" cost me a vast amount of miscellaneous expenses and failed. "Sac. & Prof." will also cost me a lot but I am determined to keep the total down as low as poss.

Respectful regards,

Your travelling uncle.

"Judith" was the play which starred Ernest Thesiger and Lillah McCarthy. "Sac. & Prof." was "Sacred and Profane Love" which opened at Liverpool Playhouse and afterwards at the Aldwych, London.

Comarques. 19.9.19.

I at last got your wire about the play. Thanks. It was a very great success at Liverpool, but got generally rather bad notices, like most of the plays of

Your misunderstood uncle.

This letter was written to me at the beginning of my last year at Oundle.

Comarques. 3.10.19.

It is a great pity that you should over-run your allowances, as in the end you are bound to suffer for it. As you are now a prefect you will probably want more money in order to keep up the immense dignity of your position. I therefore increase your allowance to £1 10s. a month. This ought to be enough; it is 1s. a day. There was some talk of your having your own banking account at 18; but I think, now it comes to the point, that it will be better to defer this until you leave school. It can start then.

About this time A. B. was moving from his house in Essex to a flat near Hanover Square, London.

12B *George St., Hanover Square, London.* 21.10.19.

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your esteemed communication. You may address all future letters to 12B. We shall enter upon residence here on Tuesday next.

I wish you many happy returns of your birth.

At last I have got the big anthracite stove lighted in my study, et j'en suis très content. It warms. Last week the cold here gave me the most acute neuralgia, of which I am not yet cured. Edward Wolfe, an excellent young artist, began to paint my portrait here this morning. My neuralgia went worse. I have received the first proofs of H. G. Wells' history of the world from the earliest moment of geological time up to date. 400,000 words. I am to write an article on it for "The Westminster Gazette." It is a wonderful achievement whatever its faults. Ultimately you will have it at your school. I anticipate for it an immense sale.

Your still neuralgic uncle.

George St. 28.10.19.

"Enter into residence" is perfectly correct. But so is "enter *upon residence." Classicists should always remember that* English is a much fuller language than either Greek or Latin, much more elastic; and with more words in it, incidentally, than any other three languages, ancient or modern, combined.

My neuralgia is only ½ better. But I saw the Doctor to-day. We have "moved in" to-day. We came up with about 9,377 parcels. They are now all safely bestowed. I have passed most of the afternoon at the Stores, spending money, with excellent results—except upon my bank balance.

I discovered on Saturday that you had left your Douglas in a disgraceful condition. I have instructed that it shall be cleaned and vaselined. In about a fortnight it would have been worth 4½d. I have made the acquaintance of Dr. Rivers, the "Director of Studies" at Cambridge Univ. He is a very nice chap, and seems to have an intense admiration for the undersigned. I shall go to Cambridge to see him while you are there, and I anticipate that he will be exceedingly useful. So that is all to the good.

I am dining in the flat for the first time this even.

Your liverish uncle.

George St. 1.11.19.

My dear Rich,

Severe chill.
Severe neuralgia.
Can't write.
Can't go out.
Very gloomy.
I enclose £2.
I will let you know later about how I shall meet you in Cam.
Scarcely been out for 3 days.
Everything else going all right.
Love.

Your afflicted uncle.

At this time there was a proposal that my brother Clayton should adopt banking as a career. A. B.'s remarks on banking follow—together with his report on the dress rehearsal of the London production of "Sacred and Profane Love."

George St. 10.11.19.

Clayton of course is no affair of mine, but I must say I think it would be a very great pity for him to go into a Bank *unless he feels like it.* A bank is the grave of ambition. It is a certainty, of course, though always underpaid. Some men have little or no ambition and prefer an ill-paid certainty to the risks incident to ambition. I don't blame them. If Clayton wants a bank ultimately he may as well have a bank at once—so far as I can see.

At the dress rehearsal of my play on Saturday night the producer called the company together on the stage afterwards and slanged them mightily. He said the fourth act was disgraceful. He exaggerated, but there was something in it. I prefer a dress rehearsal to be bad, as it bucks up the artists for the first night. However, they are having a special rehearsal of the last act this morn. I shall not be there. Also the revolver

missed fire, several times. This was fatal to the 3rd. act. I hope it won't miss fire to-night! The theatre is very large, very fine, and very cold. A sort of arctic hell.

Your about to be acted uncle.

George St. 11.11.19.

Last night was a very great success: but whether the play will really run remains yet to be seen. The audience wouldn't leave the theatre. I went to the opera and came to the Aldwych when I thought my play would be over. But it was late. I *had* to appear twice before the curtain. House crammed.

Your sleepy uncle.

George St. 24.11.19.

The play is continuing to do better. On Saturday night it played to more than any play of mine has ever played to before. Namely £305. I think that every seat in the theatre was actually paid for: which is something. The theatre is so cold that I am surprised that anybody is fool enough to pay money to go into it. *I* wouldn't.

After the Carpentier-Beckett fight.

George St. 5.12.19.

Last night I was at the Prize Fight. You may believe me when I tell you that Beckett was in every way outclassed, and simply had not a look in. I sat just behind the Prince of Wales. He requested my host, Harry Preston, to go and talk to him, but his anxiety to meet me was admirably concealed. My visit to the Prize Fight did not cost me anything at all as I received an invitation, which included a magnificent dinner. It was a great thing.

Your still ill uncle.

George St. 15.12.19.

Dr. Rivers told me that Clare was designed by Wren. It might be Adams. I must look it up. I like the way you talk of "J. J." Are you aware that he is a very great man? It is true that when I saw him, on Tuesday, I said to Rivers that he looked like a grocer I suppose that people who spend their lives in small educational towns untended by women are bound to become peculiar to a greater or less extent—chiefly greater. Talking of the peculiar there is a most weird caricature of me in "The Outlook" this week, and there was one still weirder in something else last week—I forget in what. I am now very well. I was certainly billed to the chone* at Cambridge; but I have recovered therefrom. I shall look out for the exam. news.

Your 'attendant' uncle.

Clare was actually designed by John Westley. "J.J." is Sir J. J. Thomson. The exam. was the entrance scholarship examination which I was taking at Cambridge at the time.

*A favourite "Spoonerism" of A. B.'s.

1920

THE OLYMPIA VICTORY CIRCUS

BROOKS'S CLUB

PORTUGAL

"SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE" IN NEW YORK

ESSEX.—THE FORD

THE O.T.C.

TENNIS.

THE FILMS

BUYING A YACHT

THE "ZORAIDA"

SCOTLAND

THE DENTISTS

FITTING OUT THE YACHT

George St. 12.1.20.

I have begun to work again, and my health is much better. The mere thought of going to Portugal has had a marvellous effect. Strange! We went to the Olympia Victory Circus on Saturday night with the brothers Sitwell. It was a great thing. Especially the roundabouts. We came home with the brougham full of hydrogen balloons, which occasionally swept out on their strings through the window into the infinite ether. It rained and blowed so much yesterday that I only went out for about 15 minutes. I saw Dion Boucicault in Regent St. He is about 3 feet high and a great comedian. Instantly he saw me he stopped and lowered his hat to his knees, bowing. We were about 20 yards off. Of course I did exactly the same. People in Regent Street must have wondered where we had escaped from. The one hydrogen balloon left has just sunk very slowly from the ceiling. It is at about the level of the table and still sinking. But the glass is rising. I am going to Portugal on the 30th and shall be away 28 days. The play is still going badly.

Your re-established uncle.

George St. 19.1.20.

I dined at Brooks's club in St. James's St., the club where Charles James Fox, Sheridan, and so on used to gamble so much. So they showed me the betting book, which recalls all the old bets, and which is still used. Charles James F. was certainly a very foolish gambler. No wonder his debts had to be paid by the club! Some one said of Brooks's club that it is like a Duke's house, with the Duke dead upstairs. It is. The big room upstairs is as it was in C.J.F.'s time. I mean architecturally and decoratively. The food is very good.

Harold Hales is coming to see me today, for tea. What a

scene! He is convinced that he is the original of the Card. (He is.) And he is intensely proud of this. The play will not recover.

However, I am writing a new one.

Your busy uncle.

George St. 26.1.20.

The trip to Portugal is not beginning well, as I have heard this morning that, owing to the serious illness of a patient, the Doctor can't go. This is indeed a bit thick. As the patient's condition is hopeless, I should not be inconsolable if he died before Wednesday night. I am composing my new play at an unheard-of rate. I expect to finish the 1st act before I leave England.

Your vanishing uncle.

P.S.—By the way, I fear I shan't have an address for next week, except the Bay of Biscay.

R.M.S. Hildebrand. 1.2.20.

Mr. Swinnerton & I have now been on the high seas for nearly two days in rough and roughish weather, and haven't yet come to any harm. We are nearby Havre, where we ought to dock about 5 p.m. We are astonied to find that the boat stops at Havre from Sunday evening till Tuesday morning, and as we haven't got our passports visés for France we aren't sure whether we can go ashore. We may be confined on the boat, moveless, for 40 hours. I have now carried idleness to a marvellous degree of perfection. I can't think of anything that I did during the whole of yesterday—except of course eat and drink. I tried to read a Balzac which I brought, but I only arrived at the tenth page. Mr. Swinnerton is the same. The best fun we had was watching the dropping of the pilot at about 10 p.m. off Holyhead in a rough sea. The pilot had 2 handbags and a bowler hat, and looked more like a local preacher than

a pilot. Still, he was a pilot. At meals I have been put on the right hand of the captain, as usual. He is a nice, simple, quiet chap, like me. This is a 7,000 ton boat with a crew of about 150, and about 600 passengers—if full. She is not full. For inst. I have a cabin for 3 all to myself—and it is not too large. The singular quality of this handwriting is due

(1) to the fact that the ship is rolling

(2) to the fact that the band is playing within 20 feet of me. (The band consists of pf and violin.)

(3) to the fact that I don't care as I am on a holiday.

Mr. Swinnerton is writing with all his usual care and precision. We have found a gent who spends all his time in reading "The Pretty Lady" but otherwise we are not very well represented on board. The weather, after fog and rain, is magnif, glor. et sup.

Your marine uncle.

The following letter was written on a single sheet of loose-leaf notepaper size 7 x 4½ inches.

Ship's notepaper not on tap at the moment.

Leixoes. 7.2.20.

We arrived here yesterday from Havre, and ought to have left last night, but shan't leave till 2 p.m. to-day, getting to Lisbon to-morrow, Sabbath, morn. Mr. Swin and I and a Brazilian gent motored into Oporto yesterday. It is about 6 miles up the river Douro, but big ships can't go up the Douro, or even into it at all. So this port has been built, just north of the mouth. Oporto is a great place, on about 40 hills, with towers on the top thereof. The principal street is certainly steeper than the Sytch*. About 200,000 inh. The life of a car here must be about as long as that of a horse at the Front. The roads are simply appalling—even in fine dry weather as now. I never thought such roads existed—at any rate near a big city. It takes 2 men to do one man's work in Portugal. Thus we

*The Sytch is a very steep street in Burslem, Staffs.—R. B.

had 2 chauffeurs, No. 2's sole duty was to wind up when necessary. We had a Fiat, very noisy. The name of Oporto ought to be Inefficienza. Still it is very amusing. We had a perfectly smooth passage through the bay of Biscay, with bright moonlight nights etc. To-day we loaded up a lot of steerage passengers, and about a million barrels of wine. The monetary system here is continuously funny. Three of us had a magnificent lunch at a great restaurant called the Crystal Palace. It cost fifteen thousand, three hundred reis. Still, after paying for it, I had money left as the equivalent in English is £1 1s. 10d. about. We saw rings in jewellers marked 3 million reis. The value of the Portuguese dollar (scudo) (1,000 reis or milreis) has fallen owing to the war from 4s. English to 1s. 7d. English. Very advantageous for us, but it makes the Portuguese very cross. The whole place is limp and slack. Two hours after we had arrived here yesterday we were talking to the agent, and a telegram was brought to him. He said: "It may interest you to know that this telegram informs me that your ship has left Havre." It had taken 2½ days. Some wires take a week. I had to wire to Lisbon from Havre so I sent a wireless from the Bay of Bisk. 26 words, £1 1s. 6d. The wireless operators have shown me all their Marconi House and got me to sign a copy of "The Roll Call." The wireless system was explained to me at great length, mais je n'y a rien compris. Je t'embrasse.

Your NEURALGIC uncle.

Mont Estoril, Portugal. 11.2.20.

I received your letter dated 1st yesterday evening 10.30. Such is the postal administration of France, Spain and Portugal. There is at any rate no rain here. The East wind is the curse of my existence; but I think there is less of it to-day. I have not yet been out (9 a.m.), and am waiting for the august Mr. Swin to issue forth. I got my first batch of letters from Cook's last night. I expect we shall be here a fortnight about. Our return will be delayed as the sole other passenger steamer of the Booth Line not sunk by submarines got himself quarantined 10 days in Brazil for influenza, and all her timing has had to be changed.

So that only about Mch 4th shall we dazzle England again. An old Portuguese gentleman of 78 told a man who told me that he had only seen snow here 3 times in his life, and he never saw it lie. It melted as it fell. The sunshine is magnif. We drove out yesterday about half way to Cintra, which is architecturally and historically the show place of these parts. We shall get the whole way there one of these days. There is a range of mountains (sierra) just north of this village. It seems about half a mile off, but the atmosphere is very deceptively clear, and I suppose it is about 6 or 8 miles off. I shall *not* walk there. I much prefer driving. The Portuguese dollar has dropped to 1s. 5d. It ought to be worth 4s. This fact assists us to be extravagant. It cost 10 dollars to drive from the ship to the centre of Lisbon. I don't care enormously for Lisbon.

Mont Estoril, Portugal. 17.2.20.

You are right about the 2 books you mention. Neither is "much good." The Corbett Smith I read a year or two ago, and thought it very uninspired. Ethel Sidgwick is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. The climate here is such that I daily have my bath in great comfort with the window wide open. I also sit at the same (or another one) to read. I also sit outside to paint. It is not a place to walk far in. We drive generally, and I paint from the carriage or in the shadow of the carriage. The glass has been falling steadily for 4 or 5 days. Still falling. The rain also is falling. Torrents. Baths full. This has taken the shine off the gaiety of the hotel. Last night there was a fancy dress ball at the Casino, with about 6 people in f.d. and the rest ordinary. A one horse show, the Casino. As there were few dancing Englishmen and the English girls didn't know the Portuguese youths, dancing was a bit off. We variegated the time by playing roulette and making money (not much). I succeeded in depraving a highly prim Scotch matron and her daughters. The daughters wanted to be depraved, but mamma didn't. However, she was. And she had to witness her Scotch lassies playing at a public gaming table and going home with money thus wickedly acquired. It

was a great sight. Mr. Swin and I are having a great time here. I expect we shan't leave here till the 28th. There are 5 lighthouses within about $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of this place. I have brought 2 of them into pictures. The cigarettes are rotten: cigars fair. Bread poor; butter great; unlimited quantities of everything, especially sugar and butter.

Your after-the-ball uncle.

Mont Estoril. 23.2.20.

The times of the South American boats (for which Lisbon is a calling place) have been all altered and re-altered, owing to quarantine due to raging influenza in those parts. Ours will sail on either Wednesday or Thursday next and we ought to be at Liverpool on Sunday, unless everything is again altered. We want to go to Lisbon to-morrow to stay till the boat goes, but we haven't yet succeeded in getting beds there. All the principal hotels are bunged up. It appears to me that all great cities, except possibly Oundle, are alike in this respect. We have had 3 days intermittent rain. The rest fine. The climate suits me. You can have your bath with the window wide open in February, and it is scarcely any colder at night than during the day. You can sit at the open window at any time. It is not a good place for sleeping, but this doesn't make much difference to me as I always sleep badly. The exception is the ship wherein I sleep too much. We went to Cintra again on Saturday and thence drove up to the castle of Pena. The castle is rotten, except the Moorish parts, but the terrace round it (parapeted) and the views therefrom are immense. The place is 1,700 ft. high and yet only about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (horizontally) from the town, so you can guess what the sides of the hill are. Up there you have the world at your feet. You can see everything except possibly the Pacific. It is like what being in an aeroplane must be. People have a desire (which they never fulfil) to throw themselves over the parapet. I have now painted 9 water colours, and written I don't know how many words of impressions de voyage. In fact I have had quite a holiday. I suppose you will soon be

going to Cambridge. It will soon be time for you to see the world. The conclusion you will ultimately come to will be that everybody is odd—except yourself. I am just going down to have my bkfst.

Your hungry uncle.

R.M.S. Anselm. 2.3.20.

We are now just off the Smalls lighthouse—if you know where that is. (The peculiar fist is due to the movement of the ship.) There were all sorts of contradictory statements about the date of departure of the said ship from Lisbon. First it was to be February 24. Then owing to quarantine delays in Brazil it was to be Feby 28. Then reports came that she had made up time and would reach and leave Lisbon on 25th or 26th. Well, she got delayed again by gales and bad coal and hadn't reached Lisbon on 27th; and on that night, having given up our rooms at Lisbon on the faith of positive statements of departure we found ourselves without beds. (Lisbon *packed.*) However, the Lisbon manager of the line invited us to his father-in-law's house for the night and gave us 2 good rooms there. We left at 3.30 p.m. on Saturday and left Oporto about 8.30 a.m. on Sunday and we shall be in the Mersey at 1 a.m. to-morrow Wednesday. (Not that I shall get up till 6.) Just as I was sending off a Marconi, to my great astonishment I received a Marconi. I thought it might be that there had been an earthquake at Oundle or that the Marquis had given you a whole day's holiday. But it was a message offering me £530 a week and expenses to go to Russia and interview Lenin and report generally on the beauties and defects of Soviet Government. I wirelessed back that I would go if the American newspaper syndicate making the offer would send with me a courier who knew Russia and who could attend to all formalities and despatching of cables etc. I don't see myself going alone. I should like to go but I don't want me to go, if you understand me. It would mean at least a month of my valuable time. We have had a great holiday in Portugal. I never enjoyed a holiday more. I only had one

indisposition, chill on the a,e,i,o,u, and sometimes w and y, due to looking for our carriage among 10,000 carriages after the opera on a very rainy night. It kept me in bed for nearly a day. I have done 10 water colours. It is a great change from the Portuguese coast to the Welsh coast. Sunday, wandering on deck with no overcoat in a blazing sun! To-day, sun, but 2 overcoats! Neither Mr. S. nor I have missed one meal on either voyage.

Your homing uncle.

George St., London. 8.3.20.

I am not going to Russia. I shall look forward to your experiment with synthetic rubber. I remember Sir Theodore Cook, editor of "The Field," coming up to me at the Savile Club, and throwing down a lump of synthetic rubber and saying that it was the "goods," and that practical synthetic rubber was therefore an accomplished fact. This must be about 10 years ago! But Theodore was always a bit of a chump. I had a magnificent voyage to Liverpool, and a dream of a grilled chop at the L. & N.W. Hotel Liverpool after landing. I am now determined to go up the Amazon, at any rate to Para, and possibly to Iquitos. It is very simple. "S and P Love" has been produced on tour in U.S.A. previous to its production in New York, and the receipts have been tremendous. So that although it failed here it may succeed in U.S.A. In spite of its failure (comparative) here, I have up to now made more money out of "S & P L" than out of any other play within the same period from production, and more money than the total receipts of any play except "Milestones" and "The Great Ad." So that we still live.

Your work commencing uncle.

George St., London. 22.3.20

I am now extremely busy on my new play. "Sacred and Profane Love" in New York is apparently a very great success

indeed. In fact the receipts are immensely higher than anything I ever had before. In London S & P L never reached £1,500 in a week. In New York it exceeded £4,200 in the first week. Some theatre. Benson always does pretty well in his travelling shows. As a man I like him very much. He is delightful. Next week I go to Comarques.

Your occupied relative.

George St., London. 30.3.20.

With regard to clothes, you had better get what you can, to last you up to Cambridge. I shall be able to look after you at Cambridge. Clothes, and decent ones, can always be got at Selfridges. I recently had a suit made at *my* tailors in a fortnight. But then I go to the same tailors as H.M. George V. I have finished the second act of my play. It took ten days and the act is probably too long. I have just had the New York criticisms of "Sac. & Prof." They are as usual entirely rotten. But the play is doing tremendous business. At least it was when I last heard. I expect to hear again to-morrow. My Portuguese water-colours are the wonder of London. I am now being strongly urged by very tempting offers to write a play about "The Card," but I don't know yet whether I shall. I feel rotten. Happily to-day the neuralgia seems to have passed.

Your suffering uncle.

A significant feature of A. B.'s letters to his acquaintances was his method of address and his signatures. To me he usually started "My dear Rich" and signed himself A.B. in a kind of diphthong. Other forms of starting his letters were "Honoured Sire," "Hey, guv." and so on. An unusual signature is to his typewritten letter 12.4.20. "Your dramatic Uncle, Arnold Bennedetto."

Nearly all his weekly letters to me were hand-written. When he was very busy he used to write his own shorthand letters which were typed direct from his shorthand by his secretary, Miss Nerney.

A. B. used to walk miles "collecting ideas." He was well known near his home in Essex, and could often be seen walking rapidly along the country lanes, well wrapped up, alone. He would nod to acquaintances and pass directly on, but afterwards he retained no recollection of having met them.

Comarques, Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex. 13.4.20.

If it doesn't stop raining here you won't get here, and even if you do you will want a boat rather than a motor-bicycle. Nevertheless, I go out for 2 hours each morning to collect my so-called ideas—and I come home wet through from the ankles downwards. I possess now the greatest macintosh you ever saw. It is The Douglas of macintoshes, and like The Douglas only needs a self-starter to be reasonably perfect. I am working about 12 hours a day.

Your still more dramatic uncle.

His post-cards were remarkable for the amount of information or instruction compressed into a few phrases.

Comarques. *Post-card.* 14.4.20.

Do *not* arrive here till Thursday. You will upset my play, which has its importance, if you do. And don't hurry on the way.

Your sagacious uncle.

In the following letter he refers to the Marquis. This was F. W. Sanderson, Headmaster of Oundle School, who was always known to his scholars as "Beans," but H. G. Wells and A. B. called him The Marquis of Beans.

Comarques. 19.4.20.

Sir,

I am arranging an appointment with you at the dent's for Friday. We will settle the clothes bill when you are here. I have written to the Marquis "to give notice." The car is working marvellously well, and uses much less petrol than it did. Dumerton took the engine completely down during the winter. Mr. Sullivan may be over for a night at the week-end. This is about all.

Your play finishing uncle.

Comarques. 11.5.20.

I have had neuralgia all the week-end, and all the week-end I have been working at gratis work for other people. Neuralgia now gone: reward of virtue. The great question of my birth-day present is highly complicated, and I must, full of thanks, nevertheless perpend thereon. I shall write to Beans to-day from London about your work. To-morrow I am off to Bournemouth to see Mr. Rickards. Return Thursday. This seems to be the way I earn my living, just now. The weather is magnif. and the garden looking up. Next Saturday I shall inaugurate the tennis season here, D.V.

Your travelling uncle.

A. B.'s remarks on clothing are curious when one considers his supposed sartorial superiority. He had been so impressed by a description I sent him of a big field day of the O.T.C. near Berkhamsted that he included my description in one of his books, "Things that have interested me." More ideas on the subject are included in this letter.

Comarques. 18.5.20.

As regards the dress coat I don't know whether you mean coat or dinner jacket. I presume the latter. If so, a roll collar is correct. My latest dress coat is in London and I can't remember whether it has a roll collar or not, but I should think not.

As a blazer usually has no shape at all after it has been worn five minutes, and as the worst blazer is by the tradition of centuries always considered to be the most chic, I should say that it doesn't matter 2d. where you have the Old Oundelian blazer made. But wherever you have it made, have it made large enough.

I take very little stock in these military field days. In fact I object to them. It seems to me that the combined wisdom of the heads of public schools might devise something better than a silly imitation of war, which in itself is the most criminally silly institution now surviving amid humanity. If either you loyal infants or the heads had spent a year or two in the trenches you wouldn't be so keen on attacking towns. I am sure that H. G. Wells could invent a better method of spending a day of sport and physical and intelligent rivalry in the open air.

Your departing uncle.

A. B. used to say that he had owned the two best cars in the world, the Lanchester and the Ford. The particular model of the Ford was the old T type known as Tin Lizzie and he drove this many miles in the Essex district. His later experiences with cars are given in this series of letters.

Comarques. 25.5.20.

I drove the company to Clacton on Saturday morning, and in turning a corner at bottom of a hill found that the foot brake did not act at all. The excellent Fred must have put it on too sharply and simply stripped it. Since then I have been driving on the hand brake alone, ticklish, but I have let no one else drive. I hear of a very good car—the A.K.S. or some such name—friction drive, been on the market 5 or 6 years but now much improved. £400 new. If I was buying a car I would buy that one, but as we shan't use a car after October, and as the present one is in perfect order (bar brake) I see no point in buying a new one, especially as I want a yacht and there is a horrible slump in theatres. I don't see why the Ford shouldn't last for years.

Your holidaying uncle.

Wells and A. B. visited Oundle a week-end before speech-day and so avoided the usual crowd of visitors.

Comarques. 31.5.20.

Thanks for your letter. This is the most interesting letter I have received from you for a long time—not excepting even the great Oundle fire brigade letter. Everyone round here—except me—suffers from insects as you do. They never seem to touch me: if they do they only caress me. I daresay that your 'taking a senior form' was 'amusing' but I bet it also made you nervous. It is now planned that we arrive on Saturday afternoon about 4. I wish we could play tennis after tea. (And after that you could play the Death of Asa.) Having been asked whether we should leave on Sunday or Monday I have voted for Monday. The great prefects' breakfast on Sunday morning will be my breakfast—not the Wells's. I am making adequate arrangements for this repast, but I don't know the time for it. I was very rheumatic on my birthday. We had a dinner and a dance, at which I danced every number. They said it would do me good and make me sleep. And I have slept very badly every night for I don't know how long. I am writing a story. The arrangements for all my plays are upset by evil destiny: but no one seems to care. I don't, anyhow.

Your creative uncle.

Comarques. 14.6.20.

Thanks for epistle, although in pencil. I thought you had a f.p. but I suppose you aren't old enough yet to keep a f.p. in order. On the whole I am glad we had our own private speech-day. We should probably have had to meet Lord Horne at dinner, or else the Brig Gen. And I have an objection—quite irrational—to meeting these military mandarins except in the way of business. There are several at my clubs, including Macready: but in clubs they know they have to sing small and they do. We had Mr. A. N. Tayler (one of my co-directors at Hammersmith) for the week-end. The water went off last night.

New meter, sticky; great scenes; very annoying. I got it on again this morning, but the trouble is less exorcised than intimidated. I am still very unwell and can't work. I can only pretend to work. It must be due to my inoculatory performances.

Your procrastinating uncle.

Comarques. 22.6.20.

Your letter received at 3 p.m. to-day just as I am going to play tennis. Je fais attendre mon monde pendant que je te griffonne un petit mot. If you have short measure it is your fault. I can't begin to write till I have heard. Anyway *don't fail* the Little Go; that is my final advice to you. I am working like anything here, and I am going to write for the films direct. Recently become very friendly with the great Jesse Lasky. I am going to change the films.

Health good.

You seem to have had a good speech-day.

Your athletic uncle.

Comarques. 27.6.20

Without boasting I may say that however busy I am—and I am sometimes fairly busy—I keep level with my correspondence. You don't. Still, you will never leave school again so excuses must be made for your fluttering heart. Physics, mechanics and chemistry seem pretty good; but I suppose that a certain amount of maths will be required in your subsequent career, and if so . . . ? ? ? I can't arrange any of my own plans till I have been to Southampton and Cowes next week to look at yachts, and till I have heard about the prospects of autumn plays. You ought to have acknowledged the cheque by return on a p.c. I have cautioned you about this carelessness before. Even now you do not say the amount of the money you have received. You must be more businesslike. Do recollect that henceforth you are no longer a schoolboy. I am getting to the end of my play and may finish it on Saturday or Sunday, and

on Wednesday Mr. Sullivan and I are going to Southampton. I fully expect that before the end of this season I shall be the owner of a biggish liner. Nothing going on here. Tennis generally rotten—about *your* standard.

Your exhausted uncle.

Dr. Rivers, who is mentioned in the following letter, was a don at St. John's College, Cambridge, with whom A. B. struck up a friendship and whose advice he took concerning my education.

Comarques. 29.6.20.

I shall see Rivers as soon as poss., as I have no doubt that he can be rather useful to us. Also he is a very nice chap. I shall see him in London. It is nearly 1 p.m. and I have only just got up. Neuralgia and sleeplessness. But I have a notion that I shall sleep to-night. I go to London on Friday, and I begin the writing of my new play to-morrow. (I had meant to begin on it to-day.) In my official programme it was marked for July 1st., so that I shall still be ahead of time. Much tennis. We have had a young Frenchman, Jacques Bouilliant, staying here for the week-end who really *can* play. Further he can drive a car. He has a big Peugeot and he has just come out of the French Flying Corps, where of course presence of mind is necessary. He seems to average about 35 m.p.h. on our roads and his driving inspires confidence even at 50 m.p.h. on a narrow curving road. Age 21. Some lad! The weather is heavy, heated, humid, and gusty and I am like a wet rag.

Your chewed-up uncle.

Comarques. 5.7.20.

As a fact I thought you had passed it. You have a certain instinct for theatrical effects, which often shows itself. In your secret enthusiasm and glow after passing, however, you seem to have forgotten to mention the important matters which I

mentioned to you in my last letter. I am having a play produced about October 20th. That will mean almost daily presence in London during October. I expect to finish my new play in the first week in August. Then I have a novel and six stories to do. Now I have to do, later, a film for the Famous Players—Lasky Company. I am definitely in the film world. Mr. Jesse Lasky has offered to pay my travelling expenses there and back if I will go to "Harleywood" in California, the film city (where they do nothing but make films) and the entire pop. lives on films. I shall go. In addition he is paying me a whacking price for my film. His great film-rival, Edgar Selwyn has been staying here for the week-end. He left this morning in pouring rain. There was a mighty downpour yesterday afternoon. After it, we decided to play tennis, as I wanted exercise. We all fell down. Fortunately *I* only fell on one knee. The other three went on to their backs and fronts. The balls with a break on them described parabolas in the air attended by curving squirts of water. In fact it was amazing tennis. At night we danced. And I got up at 5.30. I am still trying to get a yacht for next year but I haven't found it yet. Whatever it is, it will be a noble vessel. I have been nearly dead with fatigue since I last wrote. Better now. Yesterday afternoon while we were playing tennis I heard what I thought was a pig being killed. Only at dinner-time did I learn that it was Rex being run over. Right front paw. He is spending to-day in his basket and the vet thinks he may get over it.

Your programmaging uncle.

A. B. was very particular about the regularity of writing letters. He expected my letter to arrive at the same moment every week so that he could reply in the allotted hour. He was also particular that all my allowances from him should be strictly and accurately accounted for, and he was not above giving instructions on how to prepare accounts. This will be seen in later letters.

Comarques. 12.7.20.

Your letter is dated 9th. Did you write it on Friday? In any case it is an extremely poor specimen of a letter—unless of course it is not meant for the weekly specimen. Thanks for cheque for £1 12s. and bill for 5s. 11d. The monthly sum shall be sent next week, plus 5s. 11d. I fear you will not go to California with me. While you are at Cambridge of course holidays are on a different footing. They amount in all to about six months in the year, and the theory of them is that you work during most of them, either carrying out previous studies or preparing for forthcoming studies. I am still very obscure as to what will happen during September. Much will depend on the theatrical world. I have done 2 acts of my play, but am still full of neuralgia and rheumatism.

Your martyrised uncle.

Comarques. 19.7.20.

You had better let me have your camp address. I have received the camping circular, with particulars of damage to parents inflicted by the said camp. Mr. Doran is now in England. He had lunch with me last Friday at the Garrick Club, and he is coming here next week end. We had 14 assorted persons to tea yesterday, including two 1st rate tennis players. Unfortunately these players cannot come to play to-day when I am having a proper tennis party, which party will be a failure, for games, as I have been deeply disappointed in other players declining invitations. Fine tennis at Frint on Thursday when I had speech with Mrs. Lam Cham who was gloomy after Lenglen. That night I dined at Mr. Sullivan's, and had a headache next day, not to speak of immense trouble with the car coming home in the dark. Firing only on 3, and even 2 cyls. It now appears that in addition to the live wire, the commutator has gone fut. I am striving to get a new one to-day. Except that a commutator probably commutates I don't quite understand the role of the same in the physiology of the car. I now see I shall have to buy a new car next year. But I shall buy a yacht

first. A person of less psychological perspicuity than you might wonder when I was managing to write my play amid all this. But you will guess that I wrote the entire 3rd act on Wednesday full day and Thursday morning last week, and that I shall do the 4th act in my odd moments this week. You may as well order the gown. Ask the gown people how much discount they will allow you for cash. Above all, do not let any of these Univ. tradesmen think they can do what they like. Be firm with them from the start. I rejoice that you are a despatch rider. Don't come off.

Your creative uncle.

The Mr. Doran referred to in the above letter is Mr. G. H. Doran who was A. B.'s American publisher and his very great friend for many years. Frint is A. B.'s vernacular for Frinton-on-Sea, whereas Mrs. Lambert Chambers has become Mrs. Lam Cham.

Southampton. 4.8.20.

Mr. Sullivan has come here with me from London. We had a Rolls-Royce to meet us and drove straight to Southampton. We have already fully inspected 4 yachts. I should I think have bought one formerly belonging to the Duke of Sutherland but it was a "mystery ship" during the war, and has been so ill treated that you couldn't give it me. We are going over to Cowes to-morrow with an agent to see more yachts. I don't expect to be back home till Monday. We may spend the week end at Mr. Knoblock's new old house at Worthing which I understand is very magnificent. I enclose your report. The Marquis seems to have been determined to be benevolent at the last gasp. I must write him. By the time I return home I hope my plans will be clearer than they are now. I have finished and delivered the new play. I hope you will have a safe and lightning journey.

Your yachting uncle.

Comarques. 10.8.20.

I am glad to hear about the prizes, and the cup will no doubt be useful at meals: but the accident and the apprehension by a policeman were grave mistakes. You must have been expeding the seed* limit pretty considerably I should imagine. I returned from Cowes and Brighton yesterday afternoon; I saw several of the finest yachts in the world costing from £35,000 to £150,000. Reluctantly declining these I at last bought the "Wanderer" (subject to survey) which belonged to the late Sir Hubert Parry, head of the R. C. of Music. She is 75ft over all, and 17. 5 beam, and her saloon is a foot wider than the large drawing-room here. I am going to instal electric light. She has a Thorneycroft engine. She also has 3 boats, including an 18ft. motor launch, with an American engine about the size of a peanut. I hope that you will sail in her next year. If I can be free which is not yet by any means sure I will take you to Scotland before term begins, and incidentally we can see some of the biggest works on the Clyde, which may be useful later on. To go to Southampton etc., Mr. Sullivan and I hired A Rolls-Royce; it costs no more than any other car; for comfort I don't reckon it is equal to either the Cadillac or a Lanchester.

Your blameless uncle.

*A "Spoonerism."

Comarques. 24.8.20.

I enclose cheque for £50 to go on with. More, if nec., where that came from. As regards number of people to provide for, you must of course allow for breakages. I should get enough for 4 or 6. I expect that the custom is to borrow in cases of gargantuan foregatherings. I will see after the pictures and the nicnax. I expect that the furniture left will be appalling. You must remember that, as regards sending things to Cambridge, if there is a coal strike the delays may be considerable. I need not tell you again that as henceforward you will be considerably more on your own in life the major part of the Cambridge arrangements must actually be made by you, and the responsibility will be yours to keep me informed in good time of anything that *I* have to do. I shall be there for the beginning of

the term, and shall probably stay with Dr. Rivers. So far as I can see, the only thing that can interfere with the Scottish trip is the probable coal strike. I am beginning to doubt whether this strike will occur; but if it does excursions will be dangerous. Assuming we go, which I hope and trust we shall, I shall leave London for Scot. on 28th Sept. I can't leave before, as long ago I promised to attend the prize fight (Jimmy Wilde *v.* someone). This affair was originally fixed for the 17th, but has been altered to 27th. I should create much dissatisfaction in the breast of my prospective host if I missed it. Also I know James Wilde (who is smaller and thinner than you). I have been killing myself with tennis lately. But I slept well last night and feel fairly perky this morning, the remainder of which I shall devote to reflection upon my film. The Ford is now working A 1.

Your improved uncle.

Pinmill, Suffolk. *Postcard.* 5.9.20.

I am now on the *Zoraida* in the Orwell, and shall probably cruise about until Thursday or Friday. Mr. Swinnerton and I came aboard on Thursday last. He has to be in London Tuesday morning (as he is going to be married). But I shall stick it. Finest holiday I have had since 1914, in spite of biting and wet weather. We shall go somewhere else tomorrow but I haven't the least idea where. I haven't seen a paper for 3 days.

Your marine uncle.

Zoraida 8.9.20.

Thanks for your letter, which reached me by special mess. on board Mr Herbert Sullivan's yacht *Zoraida* at Pinmill, river Orwell, Sunday afternoon. Since then I have not been ashore. The cruise is doing me a vast amount of good. Last night I slept 7 hours. On Sunday it poured most of the day. We got into Harwich harbour last night after an afternoon at Ipswich. This morning we sail for Burnham-on-Crouch. Mr. Swinnerton went ashore about 30 minutes ago for London. He is to

be married to-day, and he has a very bad cold. In spite of all this, he was quite cheerful. I expect to go home on Friday morning, and to write a short story and do a lot at a film before the 27th instant. I have already constructed the plots of 2 short stories while on board. I may do a third tomorrow. As a fact, cruising always pays me very handsomely. I ought never to go ashore from 1 years end to another. This yacht is very fast for a cruiser and we have had some great sails. Warships all over Harwich

Your improved uncle.

Comarques. 13.9.20.

Thanks for your letter and the a/cs. The latter are all right in substance, but wrong in form. You might ask your father to show you how they ought to be done. You may as well know. In the first place a/cs are not kept in s. and d. but in £. s. and d. I return them. I rather agree with you about the coal strike. I don't think it will come off, but if it does I think we can still go. Do not, however, count absolutely on it. Reckon that we shall go on Wednesday, Sept. 22nd. You might look up the trains and see how they fit you for Crewe. It must be a day train for us. I suppose we can go to either Edinburgh or Glasgow by the same train to Carlisle or Motherwell—I forget. We may go to Sutherlandshire.

"Benefitted" is not spelt like this as you have spelt it. Herein is the worst of these swagger public schools.

I have to-day sent you the finest trunk of its size that exists. The keys are going separately by regd. post. I think this will be rather big to take to Scotland. Do not be deceived by the shallowness of the space left for suits. It will hold 4 suits. I had a magnificent time on Mr. Sullivan's yacht. I slept well thereon. The first night I returned home I scarcely slept at all, and I have not yet slept properly at home. Moral: habiter toujours un yacht. As there is as beautiful estuary scenery within 10 miles of this place as I want, I didn't go very far. Mr. Swinnerton was married last Tuesday. Sudden.

The tea bell sounds.

Your expectant uncle.

I eventually joined A. B. at Crewe and nervously made humble apologies for buying only a third-class ticket. While we were staying at Glasgow we paid visits to Dunoon and Rothesay to inspect yachts for sale. The "Report upon the social tactics etc." was handed to me by A. B. soon after our arrival at Inverness. It is written on the backs of two small sheets of the hotel note-paper, each sheet being numbered and initialled A. B.

We went further north to Dornoch, this part of the journey being done by car. At Dornoch we saw a magnificent display of the Northern Lights and the next day we drove north to Golspie where we saw the ketch *Hoyden*. Eventually A. B. purchased this yacht and re-christened her *Marie Marguerite*. Our return was made through Edinburgh and Durham.

REPORT

Upon the social tactics of Richard Bennett of C. C. C. 27.9.20.

At breakfast he replied to an enquiry as to his health as though the question was perfectly normal and proper: but as he responded with no similar enquiry, it is presumed that he considered enquiries about anybody else's health to be an unnecessary and futile formality.

On a remark being made he gave no sign that he had heard it, thus indicating in his opinion the absurdity of the old theory that if only for politeness a remark ought to evoke some kind of response. On the remark being repeated he kindly gave way and condescendingly conformed to the absurd theory.

He *made* no conversation whatever, thus indicating his opinion that if one party had planned and paid for the holiday, he on his side was doing enough in providing the honour of his company.

He attended well to the mechanical details of the transport from Glasgow to Inverness, making very few slips and still fewer remarks.

The journey from Glasgow to Inverness comprises some of the most beautiful and historic scenery in Scotland. He made no remark on it whatever from 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m., although

he had previously been informed, and he had agreed, that it was advisable and polite not only to *feel* interest but to *show* it.

At 12 o'clock he said that the train was made up of different sorts of carriages.

At 2.30 he said that the train leaked.

These were his sole voluntary remarks throughout the journey.

For three days, from lunch Wednesday to lunch Saturday, I consistently attempted beginnings of conversations, with no appreciable results. I then decided that I would for the future behave to Mr. Richard Bennett as he behaved to me. Thus very many hours passed in absolute silence, while he was continually seeing new and interesting phenomena. At noon to-day I decided to try again, and by immense efforts got some information about his plans for Cambridge. The process resembled prising a piece of concrete out of a road with a lever. I then, with admirable perseverance, asked him how he had done in the exam. for the higher certificate. He replied: "All right" and said no more until I did further heavy prising. The conversation then expired.

The luncheon baskets awaited us, and I had said that we would eat at 1 o'clock. Mr. R. B. said nothing for 150 minutes from noon. At the 90th. minute he began to look interestedly at the baskets; but he could not act contrary to his principles. It would have been against his conscience to make some polite remark about the time, or the lunch, or about the possibility of Uncle being hungry. No hollow politeness, no initiative, at any cost! He preferred to go hungry. He did go hungry. But he amply demonstrated that in his opinion all the initiative, all the politeness, all the silly froth of social intercourse, ought to, and must, come from one side—not his side. He was providing his august presence, and that ought to suffice. At 2.45, sturdy as ever in his crusade for the total abolition of polite intercourse, he was suddenly relieved of 10/-, to pay for the lunch which he had spoilt. Nevertheless his principles had survived intact, and his celebrated imitation of a stupid and ill-mannered lout had been carried through to perfection. The paying for the lunch gravely unsettled him, and his magnificent silence grew more silent than ever. We arrived at Inverness

at 5.45, and he is in a position to say that he has accomplished the world-renowned passage through the Highlands to Inverness without showing the slightest interest in it or the slightest curiosity about it.

At Inverness he once more attended to mechanical details with efficiency, and then fell back on his grand old principle of confining his contribution to the amenities of the tour to his mere physical presence.

Marks for mechanics 90%
" " socialics minus 150

Suppl. Report

EVENING PREP.

Marked abandonment of the sublime principle, and acquiescence in the traditions of civilised society.

Marks 75%.

George St., London. 11.10.20.

I now wish you many happy returns of your birthday, and I hope you will get on smoothly in your new environment. I am seeing to your pictures. What with these and your general establishment I think I shall have spent about as much as I want on your mortal and immortal frame, and so among the various things you can count any item or items you like as a birthday present. A mean gesture on my part, mais que veux-tu? I began to write my new novel to-day.

Your weary uncle.

George St. 18.10.20.

I should have thought it might have been a bit cheaper to get that piano per term; but I suppose they can only find hirers of pianos during term time. What do you propose doing on

the said piano? It is little use fiddling about aimlessly on it. In fact you ought to have a lesson a week. *Erewhon* is all right. But *the* books of S. B.'s to get are *The Way of All Flesh* and *The Notebooks*, especially the latter. Keesey I have never heard of, and as I have, *en principe*, heard of everything, Keesey is nought and you *may* regret him in a few months. However you have to learn by your own mistakes. The more boating the better. Of course the curriculum is bound *not* to fit your case in various particulars, but you have to make the best of these misfits. It takes cleverness and ingenuity to get the best out of a big university, and I hope you will exhibit these qualities. In any case, I fancy that the Univ. is now better than ever it was before. You will have a very full time indeed, and if you thoroughly organise your day, masticate your food and your instruction, and boat several times a week, you ought to be all right. I shall come down for a day or a night next month. You must remind me. I am enormously busy. We have just spent the week-end at Mrs. Wheeler's in Warwickshire. I did all my Saturday's work and shall do all my Monday's work, and even on Sunday I corrected a few proofs. Motored 12 miles this morn and then took a non-stop train 90 minutes, arriving prompt at Pad at 11.30. Now 12.45, and all my correspondence and organising done. The men have gone from Brightlingsea to Golspie to fetch the yacht: which is now paid for: a wrench!

Your executive uncle.

George St. 26.10.20.

Q. Your Sunday was not well organised. You had something which ought to have been done and you didn't do it. The fact is that you lack skill in organisation. You had better acquire it. I saw Dr. Rivers the other day. He said he had invited you to his Sunday evenings and that he hoped you would go to some of them. I hope so too. You will find a *general* education there, quite as important as the study of motor cycling. Moreover Dr. Rivers may be exceedingly useful to you one day. Your first £100 will last longer than you think. The beginning is always rather a flux. You had better pay the £10 15s. 3d.;

but keep it separate and I will re-imburse it to you in paying the next cheque as it has nothing to do with Cambridge and its follies. I am now very busy indeed on my new novel, qui marche assez bien. I had an enormous debauch as the guest of the Managing Director of the Savoy at the Savoy on Friday night and was subsequently enfeebled. A concert and a poetry recital to-night. And so it goes on. The yacht is paid for, and is on her way south as quickly as winds allow.

Your various uncle.

George St. 1.11.20.

The weather has now burst up here. The barom. fell with terrific bangs yesterday and I nearly got wet through, going out to dinner. A lady brought me home in her car, but who she was I don't know. Did you read Wells's article in the *Sunday Express* yesterday? It was A.I. Do you take a daily paper, or only *The Daily Mirror*. I finished the first part of my novel on Friday, and went to the Hammersmith Palais de Danse afterwards and danced. This month I devote to films and short stories. Next month, novel again. There may be a revival of *Milestones* shortly at the Royalty. But heaven knows what it will be like. I don't know what you refer to, about Camb papers attacking the Lyric. Anyhow the said theatre has done magnif. business during the strike. Touching my contrib. to the Cambridge Review, I notice that some daily papers took out the railway accident and reprinted it as if it had just happened to me! It happened about 10 years ago.

Your escaped uncle.

George St. 9.11.20.

Well, it is incontestable that you are a pitiable organiser. You had better admit yourself beaten and we will alter the day for me to receive your letters from Monday to Tuesday. Remember that this is a defeat. Otherwise your letter is better and contains more informative news than any of yours received

by me for a long time. I understand about your evenings being overfull, but efforts must be made. These efforts are part of what is called LIFE. Perhaps your increased knowledge of histology will enable you to explain to me how a high frequency electric current passed into my gums by contact with a glass tube forces a certain drug into their *histos* and at the same time spurs the said *histos* to greater cellular activity. Because I'm hanged if I can see it. All I understand comprehend and feel is the disagreeableness of the treatment. I am glad you are reading newspapers. I recently made a detailed criticism of the Cambridge Review for the editor thereof. But how an undergrad. can find time to edit a weekly at all is a puzzle to me. It cannot of course be efficiently edited, as the job is a whole-time job. There is no good Sunday paper, but on the whole the "Sunday Times" 'has it' over the "Observer." Among dailies the best paper for general news is "The Times," for foreign news the "Morning Post," and for editorial opinions the "Westminster Gazette"—not counting the "Manchester Guardian." For 4 days I have been struck down with acute neuralgia and am only just returning to life to-day. I have the following horses in my chariot:—

a. 2 different dental treatments every other day at the dentists.
b. a treatment which I have to do myself every day.
c. one long novel.
d. a short story—several.
e. a film.
f. rehearsals of "Milestones."
g. my usual correspondence and business.

I much doubt whether you can beat this.

Your defiant uncle.

George St. 16.11.20.

I will come down on Thursday 25th for the Old Medians' dinner. Does one dress? It will be necessary for me to leave before 10, so that I can talk a bit to Rivers. And also to catch the 8.30 the next morning. I went down to see the yacht on Saturday, with Mr. Sullivan. She is immense. Work is about

to be started on her. An expensive toy. But she is not a yacht; she's a ship. I have had a return of neuralgia and am still going to the dentist every other day. Also rehearsals. In spite of all I go to a dance at the Savoy to-night.

Your variegated uncle.

The Old Medians are the Old Boys of the Orme Boys' School, Newcastle, Staffs., formerly "The Middle School." A. B. himself was an Old Median, and sometimes attended the meetings at Cambridge of the Cambridge Old Medians.

George St. 23.11.20.

Grazia! I am furiously in the hands of the dentists (plural) and really ought not to travel owing to the danger of taking cold. Half the time my mouth is full of blood. Hence I shall respectfully ask leave of you and the other Medians not to dress on Thursday night. It would be madness for me to change in Dr. Rivers's ice house of a bedroom. I shall come to Cambridge straight from the dentists, and I am only coming because of my justly acquired reputation for reliability. I am overworked and overtortured at this present. What is worse I arranged some time since to give a dinner to Elgar, Barrie, Henry Head, Sassoon, etc. and the dinner occurs precisely to-night. I shall not quarrel with you for buying books if you buy good ones. Last night I was at Auntie Tertia's (another old appointment) and had blood and Xmas pudding for supper. Happily I had a closed carriage to return. The revival of "Milestones" was enthusiastically received; but I doubt if the thing will run long.

Your broken uncle.

George St. 30.11.20.

I thank thee. I am laid up with an intestinal chill and have had to break all my engagements. Can't write much. It is customary, when asking for further cash, to render an account

of the last lot, and to indicate what sum is required, approximately. I am glad you won the race and will receive pewter therefor. The dinner was all right, and the fact that I began to be ill the next day does not, I think, connect up with the dinner.

Your afflicted uncle.

George St. 7.12.20.

The Univ. terms are absurd. Besides possible lab work, I should have thought that you would do some hard reading during the vac. If you are learning the management of money it is something; but don't forget that Tripos at the end of 2 years. This is almost as important as rowing. I should much like a *good plain* walking stick, with a crook handle. I seem to have only one walking stick. I don't know where all the others are. I have this minute finished the final draft of my film story. It has to be recopied and some details added; but the thing now exists constructionally in its totality. That is something. Next week I propose to resume my novel. But the week is likely to be cut into, as in the middle of it I am going to a grand Covent Garden ball in aid of the Actors' Orphanage, and this will bust up at least a full 24 hours for me. Such is life. I am now much better except for somnolence, which is rotten. The yacht is steadily absorbing money. The Lalley electric installation is on the rail. I have bought a mighty motor launch (*Watermota*) which does 7 knots. It cost £150, and is in first rate order. I have tried it. I am now going to sell the 'Gig' and get a dinghy instead. The gig is too large. With the launch and the dinghy slung in davits on either side of the craft blazing from end to end with electricity, some sort of noble effect ought to be produced. D. V. surely! Further, I have now nearly finished with the dentist. One tooth has to be extracted. It is a back tooth. The high frequency electric current treatment, though very offensive and nerve racking, has undoubtedly scotched the pyorrhea—a word I could never spell. I am now off to the Club for lunch.

Your hungry uncle.

George St. 14.12.20.

I have now finished with the dentist for some time. In a month I shall have to buy a tooth to replace the one which was withdrawn from my territory by brute force yesterday afternoon at 5.10. I must say the new local anæsthetic "novocaine" is a wondrous thing. None of the danger of cocaine. It is injected into the gum, and within thirty seconds the tooth can be drawn and you feel absolutely nothing, and in 2 or 3 minutes more the gum is normally sensitive again. It makes tooth extraction a pastime for patients. My film is done. To-day I resume my novel. On Thursday I go to the theatrical charities Fancy Dress Ball at Covent Garden in the evening dress of the year 1860. My health is very much better and will stand it. Otherwise I wouldn't take the risks. Still I want a holiday and shan't get one. Yesterday morning our water main was frozen, owing to a useful dodge of putting the cistern on the roof! However, I got a plumber *at once*. My dentist had suffered the same misfortune, but at 5.30 p. m. he hadn't got his plumber.

Your active uncle.

George St. 21.12.20.

Q. I got your letter just as I was setting off for Brightlingsea to inspect the work on the yacht. It has rained and winded all day. I got billed to the chone. It is now 9.30 eventide and I had every hope of being ill to-morrow. The Lalley engine is now fixed and the wiring is on the way. I think it will be all right. But I fear the noisiness of the main engine (Kelvin, 25 h.p. nominal). Yea, I much fear it. Mr. Sullivan has sold his house to the Essex C. C. and is much elated thereby as he wants to have only his London flat and a larger yacht. At the Fancy Dress Ball on Thursday, as a pillar of the West End stage, I figured as a dandy of 1830 and danced till 3.15 a. m. I enclose a Xmas present—not that the stick has arrived. It hasn't. You will give my Xmas wishes to your parents and frères. We shall do nothing at Xmas but dine at Claridges. I really *have* to work and I shall slave all through the festive season.

Your exemplary uncle.

George St. *Postcard.* 24.12.20.

Q. The stick is absolutely right.

A. B.

George St. 28.12.20.

When I received your letter yesterday I was laid up in bed with stomach poisoning. Something I ate here on Sunday. I am now up again, but markedly enfeebled. On Christmas night we spread ourselves at Claridges' Hotel, where there was a vast crowd practically all of whom wore cracker paper caps. I got the people home here before 1 o'clock, which was very clever of me. We are going to do similar at the Savoy Hotel on New Year's Eve. Perhaps I need not explain to a shrewd person such as you are that I need the scenic material for my novel. Well, I am getting it. The novel itself, however, seems to be continually held up by all sorts of impediments. I doubt if I shall be equal to a stroke to-day.

Your poisoned uncle.

1921

Accounts

"Don Juan"

"The Love Match"

The Greek Play

Manuscripts

The Pavement Club

Cruising in the Channel

Yacht "Amaryllis" on the Riviera

George St. 3.1.21.

The yacht work is proceeding. I hear that 8 joiners are on board: which rather frightens me. She ought anyhow to be ready for sea some time in April. I wrote 2,800 words of my novel yesterday, Sunday. This ought to give you something to think about. The New Year's Eve dinner at the Savoy was the noisiest, vulgarest, costliest thing of the sort I ever had anything to do with. I had scarcely imagined that there were so many people in London with so much money and so little taste. However, I got all the material I wanted, and I had 2 gifted young creatures to dance with. Home at 1.30. Enfeebled the next day. "The Beggar's Opera" people are having a ball on Friday week, at which I shall be. This piece had just been produced in New York, under our auspices, with apparently great success. Nigel Playfair went over to do it. "Milestones" is not doing very brilliantly. The literary editor of the "Daily Express" is coming to see me about some articles (short). Fred got the Ford up to London, but he skidded on the wet tramlines near Islington and broke the near back wheel completely to smash. Fred had a shock. I had told him that driving in winter in the trammy suburbs was dangerous. He now knows it. He nearly killed a few people.

Your productive uncle.

"Fred" was in service with A. B. for many years. He started as a gardener's boy and after being electrician and chauffeur at Comarques eventually became butler and valet and during the summer season steward on the yacht.

George St. 4.I.21.

Please check the enclosed account and return it to me at once. I should have thought that before this you would have found time to have sent me your account up to date. The delay may be due to your passion for postponing things or to the heavy nature of your present engagements.

Your casqueur en chef.

George St. 8.I.21.

I return your account because I cannot understand it. It gives no particulars of your receipts. If, as I suspect, the entries on the left-hand side are the amounts of cheques drawn on the bank, let me explain to you that, in ordinary accounts, cheques, as such, never appear as receipts. In fact, as such, they do not appear at all. They are simply a method of payment, and a full record of them is shown in the bank pass-book only. If you draw a cheque and cash it you cannot count the transaction as a receipt, because you are only taking your own money out of the bank, and it is no more a receipt than taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another. If the entries on the left-hand side of your account are not cheques, then I am entirely at sea in the matter. The entries on the left-hand side should be confined to money received from sources beyond yourself. By the way there is no need to bring into your accounts any moneys received as presents. I mention this because I see an item "Cash A. B. £5." If this receipt is put into the account, why are not your other receipts from me put into the account? In brief, the whole affair is a deep mystery to me.

Your involved uncle.

George St. 10.I.21.

Thanks for letter (better) and the enclosure. As regards the enclosure I see that £10 19 1 was spent by you in food during the 8 weeks' term. This is in addition to £20 11 4 for food in

the College Bill. This makes £31 10 5 for the 8 weeks, within a fraction of £4 a week. There seems to me to be something wrong here. I don't want you not to have plenty to eat, but £4 a week is surely excessive. It occurs to me that the kitchen account (of the college) may include about £5 for that O. M. dinner. I see you have a credit of £2 15 3 received for 3 dinners and there is nothing on the other side in your account. Hence it must be in the College account. What is included in the College 'Buttery' account? I did a great deal too much work yesterday (3,000 words) and to-day am deeply enfeebled. And I have to go out to lunch with George Moore and to dinner with St. John Ervine. Don't forget what I told you about accounts. Transactions between you and the bank should not appear in any account except your pass-book, and money in the bank should be treated, in accounts, as if you personally handled it. Of course you can't be expected to do accounts without any help: but I think you will soon grasp the main principles. The yacht work is proceeding rapidly and extensively. I only hope that my novel will be finished when the yacht is.

Your C 3 uncle.

George St. 17.1.21.

Yes, well, *I* don't see either how any cut is to be made in the catering department. And while you will of course exercise all due restraint, I emphatically do *not* want you to stint your meals. The notion of a bread and cheese and jam lunch does not appeal to me at all, and I do not think that it is a good thing. All my books are well worth the money charged for them and you cannot go wrong in buying them—unless I warn you to the contrary beforehand. The new book is an education in itself for any young man, even an Oundelian. In fact if you read it, it would have the horrible but salutary effect of causing you to perceive the narrow limits of your own knowledge and interests. And this in spite of the fact that I cannot diagrammatise the 4-stroke engine. I have been deeply and vastly unwell for a week. One of those mysterious attacks which great

numbers of people are having just now in the tum-tum. Couldn't work at all. Couldn't go to the Beggar's Opera Ball on Friday. To-day better but not cured. Much trouble of late with the yacht. Electric installation insufficiently wired. Etc. Captain despairing.

Your avuncular ruin (physically).

George St. 25.1.21.

Perhaps it is not quite a pity that you are out of the 2nd boat into the thirds. No good striving beyond your avoirdupois. We have been suffering much from theatres lately. I had to go last night to see "The Wandering Jew" because the star in it, Matheson Lang, is thinking of buying my "Don Juan." He is a very good actor, with fine presence and voice: but his notions of putting a play on the stage are not mine. Still, I think he will be granted the privilege of putting mine on if he will pay enough. Norman MacKinnel is thinking of putting on "The Love Match." But he wants me to alter it and I won't. He is coming for tea to-morrow, and if he doesn't give way under the influence of cake he will not have the play. I was asked this morning what I thought of when I lay awake in the night. I replied: "I think that I am a very decent sort of fellow." A series of little articlettes by me begins in the "Daily Express" to-morrow. I hear that the price of all penny morning dailies is shortly going up to 1½d. Your Mail will cost more.

Believe me, dear sir,
Your sincere uncle.

George St. 1.2.21.

I think you had better cling to your ancient and démodé Douglas for the present, thank you very much all the same. As for the push bike (mine) it is practically worthless and in so far as it can be forced to move from one point of the earth's surface to another it is employed for the benefit of the estate by the villeins thereof. Your friend Mr. G. H. Doran was here last

night and had not forgotten you. Lord Beaverbrook was also here, and we had a very 'vital' and destructive evening—destructive, I mean, of common illusions. I had lunch at the house of the editor of the "Daily Express" yesterday. It is marvellous that I do any work at all. Still I wrote 2,000 Thursday, ditto Saturday, 200 Sunday, and 1,000 yesterday. To-day I am hoping for 2,000 which would achieve the end of the third instalment. My health is now restored, and though I get little sleep I am in a creative fury and rage. You will understand these matters better when you have chucked engineering, chemical or otherwise, and taken to authorship. The end of the revival of "Milestones" will occur on either Feby 12th or Feby 19th, and the thing will have had a run of about 100 performances. Not bad but not good enough. I have now sold another play (to Norman MacKinnel) and I am engaged in trying to get Gladys Cooper to act in it.

Your active nonagenarian uncle.

George St. 8.2.21.

Thanks for yours of yesterday. It contains nothing about the chief present object of your residence in Cambridge, but I am glad to see that you are struggling with Wells's Historical Outline. The author has just gone to Italy, after an attack of pneumonia; it was an unwise excursion. The play which he and St. John Ervine have made out of "The Wonderful Visit" is to be presented on Thursday. As St. John Ervine is the dramatic critic of "The Observer," of course he cannot do his usual weekly duty. So I am taking his place for this occasion only. If I don't happen to care for the piece I shall be in rather an awkward position. My own work is going on very slowly, and I haven't had a good night's rest for 3 or 4 weeks. So far as I can remember I have had one fair night. Last night after going to the Coliseum I was most astonishingly wakeful and if I had had any sense I should have got up after going to bed and begun to work. Unhappily I insisted on trying to sleep. I got about 2½ hours of sleep between 11.10 and 8: scarcely enough. Makes work almost imposs. No recent news as to the yacht.

The car has been returned to Thorpe. I have had double windows put into my bedroom so as to stifle the striking of the church clock. The device is successful.

Your insomniac uncle.

George St. 15.2.21.

I am coming to Cambridge on Saturday March 5th to see, incidentally, an afternoon performance of the Greek play. I shall return the same night, partly because I am very busy, and partly because the season is not yet sufficiently advanced for me to withstand the rigours of Dr. Rivers' bedroom accommodation. I feel I can only do this between May and October. I reckon I shall come again in May. In fact, I shall. After a week's illness I resumed my fictional labours yesterday. I was very disappointed with the Wells-Ervine play, and the article in the "Observer" was very difficult to write. I should think that Gyp Wells also was not too pleased with the affair. I saw John Warrender in a marvellous dress suit. Mr. Doran came here for a farewell dinner last night. He was to leave London this morning at 8.45 from Waterloo. I gave him your message. He is fine and was very pleased indeed with his stay as he has established relations with many political and other nobs. The fact is, he is a very agreeable fellow. On Friday week I go to inspect the yacht. One of the masts has begun to rot. A new mast costs about £100. I hope to save it but am rather doubtful. And so things go on. However, I have bought the electro-plate for the yacht, and I got it at trade price.

Your restored uncle.

George St. 22.2.21.

Q. And for Greek stuff.

But——

I see with regret that you have begun not to be quite certain even for Tuesday morning's first post. This is a pity.

As regards Saturday March 5th I can be at your disposal either

for lunch, tea or dinner. The fact is, I don't care much for the St. John's dinner. It is both poor in quality and poor in quantity. Could we fix up a dinner somewhere to which Dr. Rivers could be invited? My dinner of course. I don't agree with all this specialising which you hanker after. Much better to take the general exams. How do you know what will be useful to you later on? Nothing is more tedious, more provincial, or (secretly) more conceited, than the man who knows only one subject. I think the Camb. Review is pretty good. I don't see much of the others. The Wells-Ervine play is a failure, dead, and is coming off. Most plays are coming off. I note about Barclays. Let me off lightly.

Your martyrised uncle.

George St. *Postcard.* 9.3.21.

Look out for my article on the Greek play in the "New Statesman." It will annoy the Univ. and town.

A. B.

George St. 16.3.21.

I think that everything is clear for Boat Race night. I have got 5 seats for you and your friends and one for myself for the Pav. These seats cost 12s. each. You had better explain to your little playmates that the door of this house is in Maddox St. round the corner from Davis & Co., Silk merchants, No. 12A. The numbering of George St. is among the most comic in London, as 13 comes before 12. People spend weeks trying to find this door. It is a pity you can't get any work. You will soon be leaving Cambridge now—less than 3 years! When you get the next lot of clothes be sure that they are a bit big. You might grow for another 2 years yet. I enclose the N.S. article. Dr. Rivers is delighted with it. I fear that some allusions in it will escape you, but that is one of the drawbacks of a specialist when he condescends to read general literature.

Your over-worked uncle.

George St. 22.3.21.

As regards your education when I spoke to you about it last you seemed rather satisfied with it. This matter must be discussed. Between Tutor Thirkill Esq. and Rivers Esq. M.D., D.Sc., Ll.D., F.R.S. I ought to be able to get at the rights of the thing. If you can do good drawing practice by all means get the instruments etc. and get something done. Anything is better than aimless idleness. But don't spend more than is reasonable. I am now "torn between conflicting opinions" as to a certain course of conduct. I met Dr. Rosenbach of Philadelphia, the big book and MS. dealer, yesterday, and I find I could undoubtedly sell him the MS. of "The Old Wives' Tale" for £1,000, and the MSS. of the Clayhanger series for about £2,000. As I can produce any quantity of MS just as good I am not at all keen on keeping any particular MSS. The interest on the capital represented by the above alone is £250 a year—all eating its head off on bookshelves.

Your puzzled uncle.

George St. 22.4.21.

I am now torn in two by my film and by the complications arising from my grande edition de luxe and there are other things. I finished my share of the film on Monday. I am now on the last laps of my novel. Yesterday morning I played 4 sets of tennis at Lord Beaverbrook's—people all much younger than myself. Nearly killed me. Too tired all afternoon to work. At night 1st night of "Othello." Lasted over 4 hours. I ought to have danced afterwards, but most fortunately the woman in the case suggested on her own account that it was really too late, and after politely demurring I agreed and went home profoundly relieved. I hope your work will proceed steadily. It may have struck you that I have some slight belief in regular work.

Your sympathising uncle.

George St. 25.4.21.

This letter contains no interesting news but it is signed in a rather curious manner.

"Your sitting-in-a-dressing-gown-because-there-is-absolutely-no-coal-left Uncle."

The following letter contains comments on the Pavement Club, which was a club founded in Cambridge. Every Saturday morning the members of the Club sat about the pavement and road in King's Parade and played cards and marbles and knitted ties and scarves in the Pavement Club colours, scarlet and green.

George St. 2.5.21.

Well I have written 2,000 words to-day, so I don't care, and the strike may go on. This Pavement Club seems rather rich; puerile, but in a meaty and fruity way. I esteem it. The yacht is now afloat, and I shall try her a week to-day. I hear that nearly everything is complete in her and on her. I danced yesterday and was to have danced to-night, but my prospective partner is indispoged and the affair is off. If you do 8 hours a day *real* work it will do very well.

Your productive uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite. 11.5.21.

I haven't had your letter. But it is my fault. However I don't know quite where to have it sent to. I shall get it to-morrow afternoon. I 'joined' this liner on Monday morn and as I stepped up the gangway the burgee was flown at the main and the blue ensign at the mizzen, and they 'broke out' exactly together. Fred Harvey and Miss Nerney are both wildly enthusiastic about the boat. I should like to be having an idea

when it would be convenient to you to visit the same. I suppose your various duties would allow you to spend 14 days on the ship. All these visits have to be arranged and fitted in to each other. We went to Comarques on Saturday, getting there at 3 p.m. I was 5,000 words behind with my fifth instalment of serial. I wrote them on Saturday aft. Sunday, and before 8.30 on Monday. It nearly laid me out but I was free-minded for the yacht. However I was ill yesterday after the effort. Not that I care. To live on board is enough for me. We are now in Harwich harbour and shall go to the Blackwater to-day and to Brightlingsea to-morrow. The weather is heavenly but not so paradisiacal as the yacht.

Your pleased uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite. 14.5.21.

Yes, this can be arranged, especially if you and your tall friend can share one *large* cabin, with 2 excellent beds. If this won't do I will not ask anybody else; but if it will I might have Mr. Swinnerton or Mr. Tayler. I'll tell you later whether the yacht will be at Brightlingsea or Kings Lynn. I see from the Cruising Association Annual that there is only 8 ft of water at low springs in the channel. This means we should either have to be outside or depend on tides. I may tell you that you will like this yacht. Yesterday afternoon great French ecstatic chorus lasting over 5 hours: 'Oh, que c'est beau etc.' I had the ship all dressed with 35 flags. She would make a sensation at K.L. would this craft. We are going off somewhere after breakfast, but where, we haven't decided. There is a fog. I am assured that it will soon depart. Grand dinner last night and baptismal ceremony with champagne pour tout le monde. Headaches of course this morning. Not that I care.

Your marine uncle.

P.S.—On further reflection I think it may be Kings Lynn. That would make a change for me also.

A. B.

Yacht Marie Marguerite. *Picture post-card of Ramsgate.*
17.5.21.

We anchored at Sheerness last night in a tempest close to the great hush-hush "Repulse." 125,000 h.p. 35 knots. Eighteen 19-inch guns. She looks like St. Michael's Mount. All in order for next week-end.

A. B.

George St. 3.6.21.

I was very sorry to have to wire you this afternoon that the Sunday affair is off. I only heard by telephone from Dover at 1 o'clock to-day that the yacht was still at Dover. There was a misunderstanding as to movements, but what is worse is that the weather is still very bad there; it has been blowing a gale most of the week and is still blowing very hard and there is no possibility of her getting round to Brightlingsea. Dover is an exceedingly difficult harbour to leave, and the Channel is in a dreadful state. All this is extremely annoying.

Your grieved uncle.

George St. *Typewritten.* 8.6.21.

I have too much neuralgia to write. I have had it for several days and it is upsetting my work frightfully. I have not yet had any news of the boat, and I do not know whether she will have to stay in Brightlingsea from the 13th to the 17th or whether she will move down in the direction of the Channel. It will depend on whether her bottom can be scraped during this week or not. All I know about her at the moment is that she has not arrived at Brightlingsea. Assuming that she is compelled to stay in Brightlingsea you can still have plenty of fun. There is always something doing on a yacht even if she is at anchor. And moreover there are the launch and the dinghy, both of which will be at your disposal for knocking about in.

Your afflicted uncle.

P.S.—Since dictating the above I have heard that the yacht has arrived at B'sea, and that her bottom has already been scraped, so that she will probably start off on the Tuesday with you on board for the Channel.

A. B.

I arrived at Brightlingsea on my motor cycle. On the way down I met A. B. in his Ford, travelling to London. We stopped and talked, and he told me that a letter awaited me on board. He also told me to put on rubber shoes, which I had already been told in his previous notes, instructions which were repeated again and again to all who visited his yacht. The reason for all this carefulness was that his decks were always kept in perfect condition. The letter I found on board follows. (On my first night on board I spilt coffee over his fawn cushions.)

Yacht Marie Marguerite. 13.6.21.

Mon cher,

Your first act will be to put on rubber shoes.

You will occupy the port cabin, so that you will not have to change when Mr. Atkins comes aboard on Friday. Ernest (the steward) will show you all the lockers and shelves and things in this cabin.

Your friend will occupy the large after-cabin, which Mr. Atkins will occupy on Friday.

I expect to join the ship at Southampton on Friday evening between 9 and 10. Mr. Atkins will probably arrive before me. If so, do the honours.

Edgar, the engineer, will show you the engines.

If you feel like being ill, open the medicine tin case in the saloon. You will see some "Mothersill." Take one of each coloured powder, in the little tube all complete. Only take one dose (2 powders) with a swallow of water. Lie down for 30 minutes. It will infallibly put you right.

Remember that the Captain (Joseph Major) is the absolute autocrat of the ship, and treat him as a social equal.

William Bishop, the cook, is the greatest individuality on

board, and will appreciate chats about meals and cooking. You can go and see him in the galley.

The part of the deck forward of the mainmast is supposed to be exclusive to the crew save on special occasions.

There are 2 decklights with Chinese lanterns which you can use at night (one or both) if you choose. Ask the engineer for them. The light in the deckhouse turns on just under the top curve of the bannister.

I think this is all.

Your regretfully departing uncle.

P.S.—There are bells everywhere. Ring for the steward. Don't go and look for him. The ship should sail Tuesday morning sometime.

A. B.

There is a month's gap in the letters here as I was on board the yacht with A.B., Dr. Rivers and Mr. J. B. Atkins, then editor of the "Spectator." We visited Guernsey, Sark and various ports in Devonshire and Cornwall. There were considerable discussions during this cruise about the completion of my education at Cambridge and several schemes were formulated, and the opinions of certain persons were also taken. I took many snapshots and A. B.'s views on my amateur photography follow.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Dover. 12.7.21.

Thanks for letter and photos. A few of the latter are very good but most are badly placed on the plate and badly lighted. I wrote to Alfred Mond saying you were my nephew and asking him to give me a letter to one of his big men in the Midlands. The enclosed is his reply, the reply of a Cabinet Minister who thinks he knows everything. It doesn't give all we want to know but it ends the episode with *his* crew. I don't know any other crew, I think. I have discussed it with Dr. Rivers. We both think it confirms the wisdom of the scheme of taking both Triposes, and this henceforth is understood. If you get a 1st in the first, then you shall have an extra year for the second.

Therefore: the grindstone. Verb. sap. sat. (I hope).

We have just arrived at Dover, entering between the piers dead level with the Calais steamer and she missing us by a few feet. Even the speed at which these boats enter harbour is perfectly dizzying. We have sailed all night. We left Ryde yesterday at 4 p.m. and got here at 5.30. I think everybody is fairly sleepy. The cook is without doubt unwell. We spent Saturday afternoon and Sunday in Totland Bay, I. of W., and on Saturday night we gave a dance on board, at which 3 young creatures attended. Tennis Sunday (not on board). We couldn't keep the girls and their brothers etc. off the yacht. 120° in the sun yesterday, and 92° in the shade. I hope to leave here to-morrow and to re-integrate Comarques on Friday. Cedric Sharpe joined on Friday night, pale as death. He became a boiled lobster in just 24 hours. It was coolish at sea to-day but Dover Basin is like an oven.

Your peripatetic uncle.

Comarques. 18.7.21.

My dear Richardo,

I regret that there is no loose money knocking about for side-cars at the moment. Seldom have I been so short of money—owing to the vagaries of U.S.A. I enclose cheque. I have been home since Friday and very unwell all the time. Nothing doing. Heat terrific. I have only just got up. 4 p.m. I got to Brigglesea on Thursday night, but stayed on the yacht till Friday afternoon to look after some repairs. I leave again next Friday for a month or more—including Cowes Regatta. I hope you are not allowing the heat to interfere with the work.

Your drooping uncle.

Ryde, I. o. Wight. *Postcard.* 26.7.21.

Left Thorpe Friday eventide, and have been unwell and chiefly in bed ever since. I'm rallying up off th' squab now. Could not face writing a letter.

Your damaged uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Southampton. 5.8.21.

I got your brevity yesterday in the midst of a great rainstorm as we were setting off from Cowes to transport Lady Beaverbrook and her sister to Southampton. The racing at Cowes is exceedingly fine, but the weather has been rotten, and the fragility of these craft is most notable. Three main booms have been broken in 4 days. These spars are hollow and supposed to be of superior strength. We saw one mainsail (Moonbeam) torn to pieces. The wonder is, when they have all sail set, that the racers survive at all. Everybody on board gets wet through unless he stands half below deck in the shelter of the companion. The Britannia gave a lurch on Wednesday. The skipper to save himself clutched the binnacle; the binnacle flew overboard and the skipper picked himself up out of the lee scuppers. I know a lot of details about Britannia because her skipper (Levett) comes from our port and is a friend of Captain Major's, who goes ashore nightly to hobnob with the mandarins of the racing world. We shall return to Cowes to-day, with the same cargo, for the fireworks and return to Southampton again on Sunday. My present guests, Lillah McCarthy, her spouse Professor Keeble, leave on Monday, and I take on board Alistair Tayler. I think I shall then go to Trouville, I think. My gout almost entirely stopped me from writing for 2 days, the same being in the little finger of right hand. Imagine it all inflamed and dragging along the paper! What I have done to deserve gout, I know not.

Your arthritic uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Deauville. 13.8.21.

We sailed here in 29h. leaving Southampton at 9.42 on Tuesday morning. Perfect passage, except for absence of wind in middle of night. The basin here is too small, and rather too full of yachts, and you can't see anything from it. The entrance is difficult and we got into trouble for not taking a pilot. The skipper saith he hates pilots when he knows the channel himself. I expect to leave on Wednesday, but where for, I don't yet

know. I ought to go to Brittany. The harbour, however, at the place I should be bound for is no harbour at all for us and the skipper doesn't want to lie outside. It is blowing like thunder this morning, with heavy showers. This is a place of casinos, gambling, dancing, and general laxity. I don't gamble, but I dance, and I danced last night. Expected to sleep well. Didn't. I've met a lot of people here I know. Some of the most beautiful of the young fawns are coming for tea this afternoon. I think I shall bathe this morning—first time since avant la guerre. The doctor has forbidden me to dance to-night because he accuses me of having sciatica, which I can well believe! No work this last few days. I hope that you are looking forward to some hard work. This is all.

Your sciatic uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Fowey. 30.8.21.

Strange. Yours of the 25th is the first I have received from you for 10 years. It arrived yesterday. But it is a long time since I was at Trouville—Deauville. Still, I think that all letters have been forwarded. I ultimately decided that I could not go down to Southern Brittany as there was no suitable anchorage within 15 miles of the tiny port. I had a week of the most destructive gaiety with the Beaverbrooks, Alistair Tayler, and lots of other people I knew at Deauville. Eating, drinking, dancing, and going to bed at 1.30 a.m. and having the decks washed at 6.30 was bound to do for me, and it did. I was laid very low for over a week afterwards. I sailed to Cherbourg, got there at 1 a.m., sailed the next morning for Guernsey, got there on a terrific tide (Alderney race—6 or 7 knots) in about 5 hours. Drove round the island with skipper next day, and next day sailed to St. Malo but we had to have a pilot. St. Malo is a great place. Drove to Mont St. Michel. Très singulier. Indeed marvellous. Set sail from St. Malo for Fowey. Did 5 miles. Had to return, strong head wind, nothing doing but instead of going to St. Malo we went to Dinard, close to. Started again next day. Wind not so dead ahead. In fact we averaged 7 knots for many hours, but at the end of 16 hours

(in the middle of the night) the wind went wrong again, rough sea, and drove us to Plymouth. I got up at 2 a.m. and saw the Eddystone all alone in the sea. We beat up from Plymouth without calling there and got to Fowey at 10 a.m. Here for a week. The McKennas, Maclarens and Jekylls are all here. That is why I came. They adore the yacht, and prefer it to the Admiralty yacht, the Enchantress (4,000 tons) which McKenna had when he was 1st Lord of the Adm. Mr. Swinnerton is coming on Thursday. We then sail for Ostende. Leak in the gland of the shaft. Nearly sank the ship. Edgar put it right, but it meant a day extra at Guernsey.

Your recovering uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Fowey. 4.9.21.

Can't you see that Part II Chemistry is much less of a specialisation than Mech Sci? It is. Education is very difficult and the only things that count are what you learn yourself. My stay here is drawing to an end. Mr. Swinnerton is with me, and we depart on Tuesday eastwards. In the meantime we are having a lively time with the McKennas, "Q" and wife, Maclarens and others. My launch, their cars: my yacht, their house. The engine of the launch declines to take in enough water. Yesterday morning it wouldn't take in any, but Edgar spent an enjoyable 4 hours on the thing. He loves and adores repairs. I am giving a dinner here to-night. Fortunately it is not very cold of a night, though the dew descends just like rain for an hour or two. A continual flow of schooners from here taking clay to Runcorn for the Potteries. Also, a continual flow of steamers taking clay all over the world. The scenery is fine but the climate too soft.

Your sleepless uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Ostende. 21.9.21.

As for golf, you had better continue thereat. It is a very fine game and you will learn it much better now than later. As for racing; to see a race meeting now and then is very well

worth while. To bet on the races is the act of a fool. Do you know that there is in your letters a note of self-satisfaction and gentle condescension towards others which is not perhaps wholly laudable. Self-complacency is in my opinion the chief plague of life in the Potteries, and it is deeply imbedded in the character of the inhabitants. You might think this over about once a day for ten years or so.

The East wind has gone and the weather is warm, even at night. We danced at the Casino last eventide, after listening to a concert. I shall be at Brightlingsea in the yacht on Wednesday evening next (a week to-night) and shall stay there for 2 days and go direct to London on Saturday 1st.

Your perfectly idle uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Brightlingsea. 28.9.21.

The last few days of the cruise have been magnif. We sailed from Ostend to Southend in one day, Saturday. I visited Southend on Sunday. The curious thing about it is the astounding number of ladies' lavatories. The express tram takes 5 minutes to do the length of the pier. We came to Mersea, on the Blackwater, on Monday. I was determined to paint yesterday and I did paint—3 water-colours. I have done scarcely any during the whole season—no doubt because I had made an arrangement with a big New York dealer to take all I did. I might do another to-morrow. Ostend is as picturesque as most places. It is something, at Ostende Marine Railway Station, to see a carriage marked "*Through carriage to Riga.*" Remember me to the Potteries.

Your returning uncle.

George St. 4.10.21.

I got back on Saturday, and was immediately snowed under with worries and neuralgia. I am not yet by any means straight with the accumulations of 4½ months. I left the ship with

the greatest gloom. She is now definitely laid up. Whether I shall be able to take her out again next season is doubtful. But I can say this, that the past season was a tremendous success. What I need is some plays produced. But I see no prospect whatever of this pleasing phenomenon, though it seems probable that I shall write a revue for the Pavilion one day. I am now writing a series of articles for the "Strand" Mag on "How to make the Best of Life," a subject as to which I know ½ nothing, but a good subject. My next task is to learn some tangos. I was gravely inconvenienced at Ostende by not knowing how to tango tangos.

Your halting uncle.

George St. 11.10.21.

I am bowed down with troubles, and have a lot of work to do. Also there is a chance that I may have to rush off to Washington to attend the Disarmament Conference. This would be terrible.

George St. 19.10.21.

Last night I had to go to Shaw's play "Heartbreak House." 3h. 50 minutes of the most intense tedium. I went to sleep twice, fortunately.

Yacht Amaryllis, Nice. 3.12.21.

Been here since Wednesday morning, and shall be here for another week. Mr. Sullivan bought this yacht and was not told that the batteries had been let down. The plates were in powder. New plates to be made; special size; at Nancy. They cannot be here till Monday. 2 days to solder them; 1 day to charge them. Hence you can write, if you write at once, to this yacht, "au port, Nice." I had an excellent journey; train arrived quite

promptly. Good food on train; good bed; slept a few brief hours. Sir Chartres Biron, the Bow Street beak, is an excellent travelling companion; so am I. This yacht is 5 tons larger than mine. It is very well and expensively fitted but nothing like so beautiful, and few things really work. The doors don't stay shut. The central heating doesn't work—it isn't needed here. The hot water service is good. The best thing is the large saloon on deck. I wish I had that. The staircase is also very good. The change has done me a tremendous lot of good, and the day after my arrival I got to work on a new novel. The weather has been vile. Constant rain, chiefly heavy, for 2 whole days. To-day is raw but not rainy. However, when it is *fine* here, it is fine. There are 3 operatic theatres. The Casino is about as big as the Crystal Palace.

Yacht Amaryllis, Nice. 10.12.21.

The weather here is now consistently fine. Blazing hot sunshine, and arcticity out of the sun. You can walk up one side of the Avenue de la Victoire and get sunstroke and down the other and be frozen to death. Still, it is magnificent. The new plates for the cells have arrived, and we may actually start on Monday. It is only a few hours sail to Cannes. This boat has twin Renault engines and twin screws and the engine room is much bigger than any room or cabin on the M.M. We have borrowed 3 batteries temporarily and to make the light for 8 days has cost 150 gallons of petrol—or about £2. The chief thing is that my novel is progressing. I shall have written a quarter of it on Monday—despite a chill. I think we shall stay at Cannes a week and then go to Monte Carlo. I have heard no London news except that Comarques still seems likely to be sold. I have got my Comarques piano at the flat now and the ancient tin can has gone elsewhere. Next year I shall certainly have much arranging to do as the tenancy of the flat expires in March 1923. I don't think I should stay there even if I could. It is too big. In fact the future is obscure.

Your working uncle.

Yacht Amaryllis, Monaco. 31.12.21.

We came here last Tuesday, having severe engine trouble en route. The trouble however is not with the engine but with the engineer, who certainly does not know his job. He burnt a hole in the exhaust pipe and might have burnt the ship to the water's edge. He also filled the engine room, forecastle and deck and deckhouse with oil-smoke—presumably over-lubrication. He is still charging the electric light cells, and has been for a fortnight, at vast expense of petrol, and they aren't charged yet. This is obviously absurd. Mr. Sullivan has telegraphed to London for a new engineer (English), but none has arrived. I now belong to the two private gambling resorts here, but never gamble, and shan't. The weather is magnif. We shan't make a New Year's Eve of it here as we did Xmas Eve at Cannes; two young women are prevented from coming, so it's all off. Only last night did I come across possible dancing partners. The novel is heartily proceeding. Nothing seems to be able to stop it. The other day at Cannes I had lunch with Jean de Reszke and wife. He great (though 71), she lovely (though 58 at least). I have not met more exciting and agreeable and brilliant people for years and years. I have resumed Turkish baths.

Your basking uncle.

1922

THE RIVIERA

"THE LOVE MATCH"

"BODY & SOUL"

AT BEAVERBROOK'S

DANCING

WITH KNOBLOCK WRITING "LONDON LIFE"

CRUISING IN THE CHANNEL

THE REGENT THEATRE

MUSICAL ACQUAINTANCES

A WEEK-END WITH H. G. WELLS

WRITING "RICEYMAN STEPS"

A GENERAL ELECTION

ALCOHOL

REMOVAL

Yacht Amaryllis, Cannes. 19.1.22.

Cannes is now très chic. It is not very full, but I like it better for that. Practically all the women who dance in the evening are really elegant in dress if not always in manners. Of course we now know about half the town. The novel is nearly finished. So am I. Warren's father, aged 57 or 58, came up to me on Sunday and told me he had won the tennis men's double handicap at the Cannes tournament and had received the K.C.I.E., both that very day. He is undoubtedly a great lad. We are dining with Lady W. and daughter next Tuesday. We are now at our sixth engineer. He arrived this morning from Nice. The others were all bad and most of them seasick. I have little hopes of the new one. The matter with this yacht is that both Mr. Sullivan and the captain are fiery persons and cannot keep calm in a sudden crisis. Some row is always going on. Now on the M.M. last season it is a perfect fact that during the whole time there was never one cross word. As a host, however, Mr. Sullivan is very fine, and he really understands food and drink. It rained for 2 days, yesterday and day before—heavy rain. The first rain we have had since 1st Decr. To-day is heavenly —comme temps. I work, to my great regret. I haven't yet done one drawing. I think you will like "Paris Nights." The edition *is* a new one.

Your employed uncle.

Cannes. *Postcard.* 27.1.22.

Letter received Tuesday, very prompt. I haven't been able to reply as I am laid up (as usual) after finishing my novel: which I did on Tuesday morning. Weather dreadful; health ditto. But hope is ever springing. You will have *all* you can do to get that 4th year. Of this I am more and more convinced. But not more than all.

A. B. in bed.

I shall reach London Feby 8th.

Yacht Amaryllis, Cannes. 29.1.22.

I am now up again but still with a rotten cough. I have only had 2 coughs in about 20 years. The first was last Nov. this is the 2nd one. It has rained heavily most of this week. It rained, e.g. from 5 a.m. Thursday till 1 p.m. Saturday. It is now fine; but no water colouring is yet possible. Mr. Sullivan left for London on Friday in search of a new captain. We have at last got an engineer, anglais, that I think may suit. He was 2nd engineer on the Laranda (400 tons) which put in here the other day. He was only engaged for the outward trip on the Laranda, and was sent to us by his Chief Engineer. In the absence of Sullivan I engaged him last night. The dynamo motor broke with a great noise the other day, and is being rebuilt; piston rod smashed. In the meantime the voltage is down to (20 instead of 50 odd) and diminishing hourly. Candles. Lamps. Odious. Both the big Renault engines are going to be taken down. Some job. I shall certainly be here till the end of my stay. I leave on Tuesday Feby 8. Reach London Wednesday. Go to Eastbourne Thursday to see a performance of my play "The Love Match" previous to the London production. It seems about 20 years since I had a play produced, and this one is too good really to succeed. The weather out here, seawards, has been terrific and even to-day in this enclosed port this ship is rolling like a cradle when a cradle is efficiently rocked. Well, you have got a deuce of a lot of work before you. Don't underestimate it.

Your idle uncle.

Yacht Amaryllis, Cannes. 3.2.22.

Thanks for your letter of 29th ult. which accosted me last night. I leave on Tuesday and shall be home on Wednesday at eventide, and go to Eastbourne on Thursday to see "The Love Match" as to which I gather the first performances were not at all satisfactory. I went out oaring to sea on Wednesday afternoon and the oars so heavy that I returned exhausted. However I rowed a lady round a schooner that was lying

and rolling and pitching in the outer roads. Weather excessively unsettled but this does not interfere with dancing and dalliance. Many people here now, including many of my acquaintances. I began a water colour on Wednesday, and may finish it to-day if the sun will shine at the right hour. Yesterday we made an excursion into the mountains, very fine; and at night went to a ball. Mr. Sullivan is to return to-day with a new skipper. The new engineer seems to me to be pretty good. The new edition of the "Beggar's Opera" is a great success. I hope all this physical exercise will not impair your brainwork. For myself I could not do a great deal of both simultaneously. True, I am over 30 y. older than you! I shall have no peace now until you have sat for your 1st big ordeal. Did I tell you that the Marquis also invited me to go to that London dinner? Well, he did.

Your slothful uncle.

Yacht Amaryllis, Monte Carlo. 8.2.22.

I have discussed the finance question with other ancestors of young dukes at Cambridge, and the universal opinion is that you cost considerably too much. I merely tell you what is said. I am glad to see that there is a diminution. I enclose cheque. 50 centimes here = 2d. It is a pity you aren't at a French university, therefore! I do hope you will get through a vast amount of work these next 2 terms, which will complete 2 years. I am certainly a great exemplar to you. I have now written ¾s of the novel begun on December 4th, and I expect to finish it in another fortnight. This in spite of a wild, dancing life. I took a holiday to-day from the book, but ½ of it has been spent in writing letters. The ship is still held up here for want of an engineer. A young English engineer is expected sometime to-night. Hence we may get back to Cannes by Wednesday in order to superintend the final sittings of the Conference. No rain. But frost, practically unknown here. In the Casino gardens the pond is frozen over: but, strangely ignoring this fact, geraniums are in full flower, and lemon-trees in full fruit, on the banks of the said pond. A

bizarre effect as a geranium is reflected in the ice. Magnif. sunshine. I am glad you are not going to the Marquis's dinner. Sir C. Biron, the Bow Street beak, left us yesterday, and a new companion comes to-morrow. All very smooth so far, but tempests everywhere. We are the only yacht (of size) in the harbour. One (300 tons) came in this morning but left this afternoon. Mr. Sull. sends you his wishes.

Your assuaged uncle.

George St. 9.2.22.

I arrived last night, 3½ hours late, after 1½ days in trains and steamer. Much exhausted this morn. I had quite enough worries and harassments on coming home, but the worst by far of all this morning: my agent, J. B. Pinker, died suddenly in New York last night. Apart from the fact that he was a very old friend of mine, he had the whole of my affairs in his hands. There is *no* other really good agent in England. The difference between a good and a bad agent might mean a difference of thousands a year to me. I am just off to Eastbourne now with Mr. Tayler, to see the play. Another considerable worry here. I have had a bad throat for a fortnight, and to-day I am really taking it in hand. Sprays etc. Your letter is interesting. I saw pictures of bumping at Cambridge in the Westminster Gazette to-day; but no Clare therein. I am glad to hear that the work is keeping steady.

Your much agitated uncle.

George St. 14.2.22.

I safely returned from Eastbourne on Sunday night. T performances were rather bad. An East wind was bl ing all the time: which upset my liver. There were so painful scenes. However, I was ably supported by caretaker, Mr. Alistair Tayler, who always looks aft me with the most touching solicitude—even to coming

to my bedroom last thing at night to see that I am tucked up rightly. It is one of the astonishingest examples of personal devotion that I have ever known. On Monday next he is going with me to Liverpool on a similar mission in regard to another play of mine entitled "Body and Soul." We shall return probably on Tuesday. After that I hope for a spell of London.

Your calming down uncle.

George St. *Postcard.* 17.2.22.

Of course if your heart is weak, all this violence in the form of helping to move pieces of wood and copper against the force of gravity and the friction of water is bad for you. You had better look out. Remember that many—countless—rowing athletes have permanently injured their hearts, and that great athletes seldom omit to die fairly young.

Your simple uncle.

"Body and Soul" at Liverpool was an *enormous* success.

George St. 20.2.22.

You can certainly stay here when you like and as long as you like, provided you don't interfere unduly and provided you work. It is time also you were introduced to London club life—not equal to the Union of course, but different. I go to Liverpool next Monday for one or 2 nights to see "B & S." It seems there is a film with this title. I complained to the film people about it 2 or 3 years ago. Unfortunately there is no copyright in a title. I have done nothing for several days, and shall do nothing for a week more, except arrange books and furniture. Your father can do the book business better than can, and he enjoys it more. The furniture removers said there ere 4 or 4½ tons of books. Thank heaven that most of them shall never read. However, arranging books is much easier ıan writing them, I find. I am still quite as nervous as you are not more, about your Tripotic exam. Don't let me down.

Your apprehensive uncle.

George St. 2.3.22.

The reason for this defection from righteousness is that I reached home from Liverpool late on Tuesday night, and was run off my brain-legs yesterday till 7 p.m., and then forgot your letter (which had been placed among answered letters!) until this morning. The play went *most* excellently in Liverpool, and the house was full, and I went before the curtain and so on. The mischief was that Mr. Tayler and I had to go out to supper afterwards—to meet the whole company. This feast lasted till a quarter to 2 a.m. On reaching Euston on Tuesday we found Herman Finck (the music hall composer) had come to meet us, so the least I could do was to ask him to come with us to the flat. He stayed yarning, being a good yarner, until 12.20 a.m. —and me dead with fatigue, though diverted by the yarns! Yesterday I was determined to lunch quietly at home; which I did. But there was a Lyric theatre meeting in the afternoon, and at even I dined with Beaverbrook at Fulham. Couldn't get away from there because I promised to deliver home Helen Drury his sister and Eleanor Smith daughter of the Lord Chancellor in my brougham, and these young girls definitely refused to move till midnight. Bed at 1.15 for me. However, I slept well. But I am finely sleepy today. A first night tonight (David Garrick opera). The first night of the "Love Match" is apparently fixed for Mch 21st. I thought it would be in April or even May. I fear this means that I shan't be able to come down to Cambridge for a day. But it means that you will be able to go to the 1st night anyway.

Your semi-dormant uncle.

George St. 6.3.22.

Excellent sir and nephew,

Your accounts are ever, and perhaps inevitably, mysterio
I notice over £10 10s. under the head of miscellaneous.
it known to you that you will arrive here at a period when
shall be heavily engaged. If you dance you will be left
alone than otherwise you would be. I mean in the evening

It is almost certain that I shall go dancing on the Sunday. Shall you come if I find you a woman? Or do you provide your own women for these affairs? It's no use your coming to London unless you learn something, is it? I have really resumed work today, in spite of a late Terpsichoraneity last night. Five people are coming to dinner tonight and afterwards we go to Queen's Hall to dance. Do you feel inclined to arrange my books for me during your stay here. They are shelved, at the moment, in a double sense, and Miss Nerney is engaged on the difficult task of pouring five quarts into a gallon can without spilling anything over.

Your active uncle.

George St. 7.4.22.

This place is now rather gloomy, but I am fighting against the gloom. Still going out every night! I am passing Easter at Knoblock's, but on Wednesday I depart for the day to Brighton to witness a touring company's performance of "The Great Adventure." Then on Thursday to Knob's at Worthing. I have just undertaken to write a weekly brief article for John Bull, beginning the end of April or thereabouts. Horatio B has been cleared out, and the owners are trying to sweeten the premises, and entirely changing the policy of the paper. The two chief sweeteners at present appear to be Lord Haig and myself, but Wells is being much tempted. You didn't present the balance sheet between us for theatre seats etc. This was naughty of you.

Your stickling uncle.

Beach House, Worthing. Easter Sunday 1922.

I came down here on Thursday afternoon. Heavy rain—and one long rattling house-shaking gale ever since, with a few breaks of sunshine. This house is rather wonderful. It amounts to a museum of the Regency period, and is very well done. Also there is a bathroom to each spare bedroom, which is a great comfort and solace. Sir Denison Ross and Lady (he is head of the school of Oriental studies) are here. He seems to

know all languages, from Italian to Sanskrit. As for her I have never struck anyone with her musical memory. She will not only play any classical piece she is asked to play, from memory, but she knows the accompaniments *and* words of all the classical songs, and she can play right through practically all operas. Very convenient. Mr. Knob and I have made much progress with our new play, which is in at least 12 scenes, and deals with high politics and scandals.

Your creative uncle.

George St. 11.4.22.

As regards the exam, you are not more afraid of it than I am, and if you make a mess of it I shall be most gravely disappointed and shall very probably attribute the mess to your diversions. It is neither brains nor private self-satisfaction that you are short of, believe me. Don't forget to have your awful suit put right. How you could have permitted that suit to leave its makers I cannot conceive, believe me. I am fiendishly busy and yet doing very little actually. The theatrical world is wasting a great deal of my time, believe me. I tried all day yesterday to finish my 8th Strand article and did nothing at it, owing to interruptions of a stage nature. If the same thing happens today I shall give up the ghost. This afternoon I have to join an august throng in order to "view" the newly done-up and transformed Drury Lane Theatre. I have to go to Brighton tomorrow. I went to Murray's Dancing Club on Sabbath night. I'd been an honorary member for a long time, but had never visited the same. Nor shall I visit it again, believe me. Claridge's is the best dancing saloon in London, believe me. They are just in the throes of settling what is to be the next venture at the Strand Theatre, or rather whether the next venture is to be run by Bourchier or by Vernon. The next venture will be "The Great Adventure." And I am not looking forward to it, believe me. "The Love Match" has had enormous booming in the press, and still has. But believe me I told you from the start that booming would be futile.

Believe me, your torn uncle.

George St. 1.5.22.

I don't see how you can do such stunts as helping to edit the "New Cambridge" and work adequately for the Trip or Tripos. Moreover the editor, if he is the same editor as last year, is not really a 1st class man. (I can't recall his name.) He is superficial and always wants something for nothing. If you were more free I should be glad to see you at sub-editing for a bit. You have a naturally sound style. Think only of doing the examiners in. You will certainly have a very hard task indeed, but I fancy you can do it if you can manage to be as keen on it as you are on rowing. I went down to Beaverbrook's for the week-end, and played tennis against Bonar Law. He is probably ten years older than the undersigned but he could play me off the court. Sir Robert Borden, the P.M. of Canada, was there too. He is on the tedious side, except after a meal. Lady B drove me back this morning in her own car—a charming Clement Talbot. She is a fine driver, and a fast. I did my correspondence before lunch. Lunched. Slept. Wrote 600 words of the best. Had tea. Went to the dentist at 5.30. Had a lesson in the tango at 6.30. And Miss Forster, one of Mr. Sullivan's friends, who spent a month with us on the yacht, came to dinner. She left at 11.30, and I am just answering the evening's correspondence so as to be free for my work to-morrow morning. The horrid bell of St. George's has just struck 12.

Your wonderful uncle.

"Mr. Prohack" is decidedly succeeding, thanks.

George St. 9.5.22.

Sweet sir,

Keep your eye on the ball, not on the objective; and you will pass. On June 1st Mr. Knoblock and I set forth in the yacht to write a play, which we ought to do in a month. There will practically always be room for you on the yacht which belongs to me and you. But I hope to God that next time you will not

offend my sensibilities by doing exactly nothing all day every day. I never go to Regattas, except sometimes Cowes, which is always the 1st week in August and always wet and windy. I went to Brigglesea yesterday to inspect. Everything going on well.

Your amphibious uncle.

George St. 16.5.22.

Since I last wrote I have been to the great fight. Set your mind at rest; Carpentier behaved with perfect correctness, and there was no justification whatever for the cry of foul blow. I sat in the front row, 3 seats from the D. of York, and had a perfect view. Also I have seen the film which confirms my original view. I should have written an article on the fight, but I am so busy with the exhausting work of going to the opera. Four operas this week! Many other engagements, and further I mean to finish my book: "How to make the best of life." Some week! I am most exhausted. "The Rheingold" last night is a short opera—only 2½ hours—but there is no interval to it at all. Most absurd. "The Valkyrie" begins tonight at 7, and "Siegfried" on Thursday at 6.15. They finish sometime the next morning. Crowded houses. I can now dance the tango, and am going to dance it publicly a week today. D.V. I respectfully salute you and wish you success.

Your corybantic uncle.

George St. 23.5.22.

Dear Sir,

I cannot think of anything that you ought to and can give me; but I daresay you can think of something. Anyhow it is my 55th b'day on Saturday. This day Tuesday you are no doubt learning the imbecility of Tripos examiners. I was at Auntie Tertia's on Saturday and Mary asked me to help her to

answer a paper in English composition, and I couldn't answer a single question. So that's what exams are. Still they *are*, and so your future on the water depends on your ability to deal with them. I have now finished going to the "Ring" and writing my book "How to make the best of life." Which was the greater effort I have not decided. 5 hours in a packed theatre on a night like last night was a bit thick. I was broken but pleased. I didn't get to bed till 1.15. I have seen 7 operas in a fortnight, and won't see any more for a long time. Last night I received a letter from Nelson Keys asking me to write him a play. Next Wednesday week when the shadows fall I shall be on the yacht. I am simply dying to be on that yacht and out of this town. I am making the interval tolerable by having dinner parties and tea parties. Be sure to let me know on Friday night how you have gone on.

Your unexamined uncle.

Telegram. 25.5.22.

Get your teeth into it.

George St. 29.5.22.

The preparations for a long cruise are really rather complicated. Parcels seem to be going to the yacht every day. The yacht went out into the estuary on Saturday, I hear. The gramoph. has arrived entire, I hear also. There will be more cushions on board this season than last, so that I see no reason why you should not loll about in chemically pure idleness all day during your visit. I spent an industrious birthday. Except for a brief visit to a show of French paintings a few yards from this house I worked all day. Then Mr. Tayler gave me a magnif. dinner, at night, at the Garrick. And then Mr. Herman Finck, musical composer and conductor at Drury Lane, came to supper at the Club with us, and Seymour Hicks and Sir Chartres Biron, the Bow St. beak. I got a free ride home. Last night I played duets all evening with Harriet Cohen, whom you

know. She is a very fine player. However, I am very firm with her. "You must go home now," I say. "No, I shan't." "Yes, you will." And she does. I hope the 2nd half of the exam will be more agreeable than the first.

Your maritime uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite. 10.6.22.

Congrats on the May colours. We have been at Brigglesea, Harwich, Ipswich and now at Newhaven. Nearly ½ the work on the play is done! Mr. Knobl and I are truly marvellous. We have had a great cruise so far. Harwich to Dover in a day. But the infernal D. harbour rolled us about so much (it always does) that we quitted the next morning, Thursday, and got here at a great pace for dinner. A vast tea.party on the yacht tomorrow, Sabbath. I have spent 2½ hours this afternoon answering epistles and they aren't all done now. However, I am off to see a cricket match. Understand, I am exceeding apprehensive about that Tripos.

Your perturbed uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Portsmouth. 16.6.22.

We sailed from Newhaven here yesterday, at an average speed of over 7 knots, and the first 30 miles were done at 8 knots. No engine going. The silencer of the Lalley electric installation was blown to pieces yesterday by a backfire. No deaths nor wounds. I had to wire at once for a new one. We've had dreadful weather up to today but today is heavenly. The play is proceeding fine. Portsmouth is full of great warships and royal yachts, and ferry boats skipping to and fro all day, and ships' trumpets going all day and clocks striking all day. Mr. Knoblock sends his respex.

Your occupied uncle.

Between completing the Tripos examination and the publication of the results I went to stay at Oundle for quiet relaxation in the form of training in the Cambridge Old Oundelian crew for a race against the School crew. On the evening before this race was due to be rowed I was with the headmaster's family, awaiting dinner. It was at this moment that the telephone rang and the information was received of Sanderson's sudden death after delivering a speech. For the next few hours I was involved in many awkward moments conveying the information to various people.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Southampton. 20.6.22.

It was a terrible experience at Oundle, but you learn a lot from such experiences—especially how to behave with tact, etc. I read of Beans' death the next morning and it was most dramatic, especially following on the sudden death of Rivers. Did you read my article on Rivers in the "New Statesman"? Siegfried Sassoon, one of his greatest friends, is simply delighted with it. Now as regards your 3rd, I don't know that I am quite clear about it. But I assume it entitles you to your fourth year. I hope so, and suppose that for *practical* purposes it is as good as a first. I have looked in all sorts of papers for the Nat. Sci. Tripos results, but have never seen them; all the tinpot Triposes were there though. Mr. Knob and I have now written over half the play and ⅔rds of the actual work on it is done. We are serious people seriously working. We shall probably leave here for Poole in a day or two. The Aquitania came in at 7.30 p.m. She was turned round by 5 tugs, and then backed in. As regards the backing in, it was so slow and delicate that 20 minutes passed between the moment when her stern went beyond the end of the quay and the moment when she actually stopped. We went alongside of her this morn in the launch, and looked up. It has to be seen to be believed.

Your tripotic uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Southampton. 27.6.22.

We did not get to Poole. We started, and passed the Needles, but the gale was too threatening for any but people who *love* discomfort to proceed. We sheltered at Yarmouth. After a night of that the Captain said that if the wind went round to the N. we should be caught in a trap. We got out, and came to the safety of Calshot, and the wind *did* go round to the north, and a gale too. No improvement yesterday, Monday, morning, so we came back to Southampton, where the play is calmly proceeding. We are now nearby the middle of the last act. But we shall go to Poole. The largest ship in the world is within 200 yards of us. She leaves tomorrow. The weather is simply appalling, but slightly less so: It is now merely icy and pluvious-—not aeolic.

Your want-to-know-when-you-are-
coming-on-the-yacht uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Swanage. *Postcard.* 30.8.22.

We couldn't go to Fowey after all. Held up first hard contrary winds, and then by breakdown of electricity. Had an expert 1½ days on it. Then found coil gone. Must have a man from Lalleys to see to it. Then held up finally by waiting for mail from Fowey. Then held up super-finally and post-finally by dead calm. We left Guernsey yesterday at 7 a.m. Dead calm, then, and all day. Lovely sail without sails. Main engine perfect. Got here at 1 a.m. this morn. We go on to Poole this afternoon. It is now beginning to blow a S.W. gale and the South cone is up on the coastguards flagstaff.

George St. 11.9.22.

I am in a great state of nervous exhaustion, owing largely to the fact that the landlords have not handed over in time the theatre as a working concern. The switchboard will not be complete till 5 this afternoon, and no 'lighting rehearsal' has

yet been held at all! And you know—no doubt you don't know—how complicated and tricky what is called the 'lighting plot' is, and how essential it is that the lighting should be timed with absolute exactness. Such is theatrical life. The theatre has faults; the chief of which is that it is too big. It is enormous. Still—a great sensation, seeing the name 'Regent' in vast gilt letters over the super-card's theatre! We are now engaged in educating cabmen.

"Regent Theatre, please. . . . Good God. You don't mean to say you don't know the Regent Theatre!"

But Ian Hay came to the dress rehearsal yesterday, and he told me that his dialogue with the taxi driver was as follows:—

Hay: "Euston Theatre of Varieties, please."

Driver: "You mean the Regent Theatre, sir."

Accidents apart I leave with Swinnerton and Tayler for S'ampton tomorrow morn, Tuesday, and I am going to Dieppe. I have decided to leave this flat at Xmas, and the landlords agree.

Your fatigued uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite. 21.9.22.

Dear sir and nephew,

Your letter reached me last night at Dieppe, which I left this morning at noon. We are still 20 miles from Newhaven (9 p.m.). No wind. Smooth sea. I've been much indisposed for 3 days and have spent most of today in bed. With regard to your majority, give a dinner by all means; but don't ruin me. (I may tell you that that play is a failure, instead of bringing me in £10,000. I don't know why. No one does. The elect are enthusiastic about it.) Believe me there is not much money floating about. This season has been disastrous for weather, and not very good for my health. It has been ornamented by the great success of "Mr. Prohack" and injured by the failure of "Body and Soul." Today has been the best (warmest) day of the season. But up to then September was all gales and rain. Only yesterday it would have been imposs. to get out of Dieppe harbour because of the huge rollers. Today quite flat. Bizarre! Fantastic. I am alone on the ship and rather enjoying it.

Your busied uncle.

George St. 25.9.22.

We sailed direct from Newhaven to Brightlingsea. 33½ hours. Head wind all the way, and the captain called the sea 'very nasty.' He said 9 out of 10 yachts wouldn't have faced it! Miss Nerney spent the whole cruise in bed. We and Fred came to town at 2.30 this day. I am exhausted and dyspeptic and have many people to see but otherwise I am very well and cheerful.

George St. 2.10.22.

I went to Beaverbrook's for the week-end and heard the war news hour by hour gradually shaping itself to my original prophecy that Kemal had been bluffing. But people were getting rather perturbed. I played tennis, stayed up till 1 a.m. and slept well. And Lord B drove me back this morning. His latest scheme is that I should write an entirely new life of Jesus, according to his own prescription. On Friday I danced with Tania (Harriet Cohen) and made a great mess (or rather she did) of the new fox-trot steps. But at Cherkley (Beaverbrook's place) where also I danced I was told that I danced excellently. I was invited to the opening of the dance season at the Berkley and did creditably there. I finished the 2nd of my stories on Friday and on Saturday morning went off to inspect Clerkenwell to inspect the scene of my new novel* (about misers) of which I have some hopes. I dine with Bertie Sullivan tonight. He has laid up his yacht, and is going to re-engine her at Thornycrofts. This yacht is costing him a lot of money.

Your faithful servant,
E. A. Bennett.

George St. 10.10.22.

I am sending you for your birthday a copy of a new book "Some Difficulties" by a friend of mine, Seymour Hicks. It contains a lot of sentiment, but it also contains a con-

* *Riceyman Steps.*

siderable admixture of wisdom on various subjects not generally discussed, and I think that the reading of it cannot do you any positive harm, though some of it will undoubtedly bore you. I began my new novel with great éclat yesterday morning, and it seems to be moving fairly well, in spite of the fact that I have had a chill in the usual intestinal quarter. I am now getting over the latter. Tania is practising a terrific concerto-sort-of-business of Arnold Bax's for a Promenade Concert Wednesday next week, and she has discovered that my piano is much better to practise on than hers, so she comes in here about 3 afternoons a week and practises for about 3 hours. It means of course that I have to inhabit the drawing room, but as the piano pleases her I don't mind and am indeed rather flattered. She is a very wild creature, much more wild than she seemed on the yacht; but I like her. I have room to wish you the common sense and tenacity of purpose necessary to the right conduct of your now adult existence, and I hereby warmly do so.

Your sagacious uncle.

George St. 16.10.22.

I saw Mr. Wells on Saturday at lunch at the Reform, and he seemed very well. I go there this week-end. I was up at Tania's on Saturday night after dinner to meet her "other A. B.," Arnold Bax who is beginning to strike me as a very fine fellow indeed. I think the girl is very lucky to know two such A. B.'s. I went to a Cortot piano recital yesterday afternoon after staying in bed to read the Bible and sleep all morning, and the place was packed in every corner. I then did 2 hours hard work and went to Claridge's to dine and dance with Marjorie Gordon. I think tomorrow night I am invited to go and see a film said to be *very* good "Foolish Wives," and after that to meet Chaliapin at supper at the Savoy. Wednesday night I take a few selected ones to hear the aforesaid Tania play the aforesaid Bax's new piano-concerto-symphonic variation. But do not imagine that I am not working hard at my new novel. I am. was at Clerkenwell before 10 this morning.

Your active uncle.

George St. 23.10.22.

Thanks for your letter which greeted me on my return here from Easton at 1 p.m. this day. H. G. drove me down in one of his numerous Albert cars. He lacks elegance as a driver, and strains the engine, but he seems to be pretty careful. I told them you had asked for a car, which I had refused, and they applauded me. Those 2 boys came over, mostly on one machine, yesterday for the day, and made a hades of a racket the whole day. I played six games of ball-game and was never in a loser. This killed me for most of the rest of the day, but I recovered towards six p.m. through Gyp playing Beethoven sonatas on the pianola. After early supper everyone departed except H. G., wife, and me and we played bridge. I won again. I am getting on very well with my new novel; and "Lilian" is being received with contumely by the press. This doesn't matter, as it is selling excellently. I am now bending my mind to the great question of the state visit of Mr. Tayler and myself to the University of Cambridge. He is at present in Scotland and suffering from rheumatism. He is expected back at the end of the month and we shall come $\begin{cases}\text{down}\\ \text{up}\end{cases}$ as soon as possible after that. To-night I go to a concert with the other A. B. and Tania. She gave an astonishing performance of his new concerto at the Queen's Hall on Thursday, and was recalled seven times. Such an ovation I have never before seen at a Prom.

Your creative uncle.

George St. 6.11.22.

This cannot possibly last! Your letter arrived by first post for the 2nd week in succession! At least, I assume it did. Anyhow it was here when I rang for my letters at 11.30. Under my new regime I see no letters in the morning till my creative work is done. I have now finished the first part of my novel—I don't know the title yet—20,000 words. I may be wrong to be pleased with it, but somehow I am. On Saturday I took Tania to Clerkenwell and showed her what a romantic and

curious place Clerkenwell is and where my hero and heroines lived. The chief heroine is a charwoman. I don't usually work on Sundays now but I did yesterday, desiring to finish. The whole day alone. Also I have to work to-day, correcting proofs and so on; so I shall take my Sunday to-morrow Tuesday. I see you are once more fretting because the whole University has not been organised to suit your particular case. I wrote something rather good about this somewhere lately—I forget where. I wonder at the Election *excitement* at Cambridge. Up to now practically all the electioneering I have come across is of the most puerile description, and Bonar Law's most puerile of all. Fancy saying: "The country is in a hades of a mess. Therefore we will do nothing." As for liberals their one idea is to 'down' Ll. G. at any cost. Also puerile. And Labour, though it has a programme, has no men worth a d——. I have been generally unwell, but highly creative. To-day I have an enormously enlarged liver which fills the whole of my frame.

Your bursting uncle.

George St. 13.11.22.

My work is proceeding in the same marvellous way. Everyone says how well I look. On Saturday afternoon I had to visit Madame Tussaud's for the purposes of my novel. It is really very interesting—especially the Chamber of Horrors—in parts, and as a whole it is interesting as a very well-administered exercise in ingenuousness. Yesterday I drove out to Beaconsfield and home by Eton and Windsor through fog. Eton seemed to me to be about as big as the whole of Cambridge, and Windsor Castle nearly as monstrous. Arnold Bax and Tania came to dinner. To-night is the Arnold Bax concert (at which Tania is playing) and afterwards I am holding a small and select reception here in Bax's behalf. I don't know what it will be like. But the younger school will be powerfully represented. I learnt last night that the more old-fashioned musical critics regard me as the chief champion of the younger school of composers—and I'd no idea I had championed any of them! Election night I shall spend at the Reform Club,

which will be packed (we are told) to hear the results. It will be a bit of a lark anyway, and a contrast with the following night, when I am dining with John Galsworthy in the True Home of Seriousness, the Grove, Hampstead.

Your improved uncle.

George St. 28.11.22.

I must say I can't see anything of a "newspaper stunt" nature in our simple and too brief visit to Cambridge. I thought we were all most sedate. There was one thing I noticed which rather disconcerted me. Namely that in one day you had 2 beers in addition to my champagne. I do not like this. I think you are making a great mistake. Most men 'up' do not drink 2 beers a day; many of them could not afford it. To drink anything at lunch is a grave mistake. You of course think that any reference to alcoholism in this connection is extremely far fetched. Well nobody knows whether it is or not. A minor point is that any alcohol will prejudice you in working for exams. I am by no means against alcohol. I should privately prefer you not to have more than about one drink a week because your character is not yet fully formed and you are still very susceptible to the influences of habit. But I would not dream of exercising pressure to get you to reduce yourself to one drink a week. If I objected to alcohol I should not offer you champagne. But I certainly think you shouldn't have more than one drink a day. *And never under any circumstances spirits.* I've just had the spectacle of . . . . here, taking his solemn oath to me that to save himself he would abstain completely, and within an hour creeping out to get a drink, and thinking that he could deceive me. He couldn't deceive even Fred. This is pathetic, tragic. But it is what drinking too often leads to. No victim of alcohol ever suspects that he is a victim of alcohol until it is too late. . . . . would laugh at the suggestion. Neve. the less he is a ruined man unless he can find in himself the force to stop completely. I have now definitely taken 75 Cadogan Sq.

Your wide awake uncle.

I am not very well to-day, having neuralgia. I spent 4 hours on Sunday in an open car and in spite of leather coats and rugs I reached home billed to the chone. I took a hot bath, which did much for me, but not enough. I daresay that the immense amount of work I have been doing has had some effect on my neuralgic tendencies. I have now written more than half my novel. Mr. Doran arrived at 2 a.m. yesterday morning at the Savoy, and in the evening he was so ill that he had to have a nurse and the doctor. I must go down to see him this morning. He is always ill when he comes to England. I have never known him not ill when he comes to England, and I don't understand how it is. Thank heaven I have been able to buy the stair carpets and rods off the present tenant of 75 Cadogan Square. They are very good, and not dear, and it saves lots of trouble. I have had plans of the 3 principal floors of the house. The larger part of the double drawing room is 24 feet square and the smaller part 19ft. by 14ft. Your bedroom is of about the latter dimensions. There are a basement and 5 floors. The pearl of the house will be my private suite, study, bedroom, and bathroom. The latter is 17ft. by 9ft. I have recently learned that the house once belonged to the Dufferins. The Marchioness being an American, knew something about domestic comfort and she imported certain dodges from N.Y. Immediately inside the front door is an anthracite stove fitted into the wall. Much money has been spent on this house but not by me.

Your nomadic uncle.

A. B.'s removal from George St. to 75 Cadogan Square was carried out under considerable difficulties, as he was suffering from a severe attack of influenza. It is a curious coincidence that his removal some years later from 75 Cadogan Square to Chiltern Court was soon followed by his fatal illness.

75 Cadogan Square. 28.12.22.

I did not go away, but fell ill with 'flu instead. I am just getting over it. My correspondence is vastly in arrear, and that is why this letter is typewritten. I go out to-day for the first time. My plans for getting the house into order are maturing. I cannot write any more just at the moment.

Your recovered uncle.

1923

Opera

The Potteries

Music

The Channel

Yachting

Flying

Politicians

"Riceyman Steps"

75 *Cadogan Square.* 22.1.23.

It is a good thing your 'flu, if 'flu it was, was not so bad as mine. However, I think I am now just about cured. Brighton did not seem to do me a great deal of good. I was unwell all last week, and particularly on Saturday when I went down to Beaverbrooks for the week-end. But this last seemed to cure me. I came back to-day, as I went, in his car; "seven up." A gay party. Late hours; dancing. This is the right treatment for 'flu. I did not play tennis. The weather was heavenly, and I had a fire in my bedroom the whole time. Most comforting. The house is not yet by any means done. The contractor has been ill; so has the plumber. Hammering still resounds. Paint still smells. Of such is the kingdom of heaven. And although I have bought 2 new bookcases, many books are still unshelved. I begin my own work again to-morrow. The success of "Polly" is simply terrific, and the Lyric company is making over £100 a week out of it. Even the Immortal Hour is doing better. It is a solemn thought that all three theatres advertised as doing "opera" in London are under my ægis. I have had an enormous row with Nigel Playfair (Mr. Tayler does all *small* things for me, but leaves me to handle rows with Playfair on our joint behalf), and I am glad to say that I have utterly defeated the fellow.

Your fighting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.2.23.

I had a great time in the Potteries. Sundry hours with Wilcox Edge in the train! He is a very interesting old man, and the Potteries is too much obsessed by his failings. The Mayor wore his 2 ton chain. I sat on his right. I saw all sorts of people who knew me and whom I didn't know, and whom I admirably

pretended to know. I arrived at 2.30 and left at 6.39 and got home without a headache, and the next 3 days did vast quantities of my novel. Yesterday I reposed, and had the Robert Loraines to lunch, and a musical supper party. At this party Arnold Bax and Eugene Goossens sat down at the piano and improvised, without a preliminary word to each other, a Spanish tango which lasted a quarter of an hour and to which Tania danced. It was full of new tunes, and there was never the slightest hitch, discord, or fumbling. How they do it I know not but in that line it was the most marvellous thing I ever heard. Bed at 1.45. To-day I am writing the preface to "Don Juan."

Your greatly creative uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.2.23.

Yes, I *do* mean to say that I have only one spare bedroom, and it is your room; and it is quite enough. You don't have spare rooms in London houses. London is not the country. However, there is an extra bed which can be erected in the room at a pinch. I hope that this will satisfy your requirements. Owing to my musical acquaintances I went to bed at 1 this morning. I arose, well and hearty, at 7.5 but I am unquestionably tired, after writing 1,300 words of the best before 11.30 a.m. My health is better and I am sleeping much better. I did nothing whatever at Hanley except ornament the proceedings with my presence, and I was told about forty times how much I had 'honoured' the said proceedings by my said 'presence.' You can explain this as you like. I can tell you one thing—that I had great difficulty in not going free of charge in the Mauretania for a cruise in the Mediterranean as far as Palestine. Only a man of iron will could have refrained, especially as I wanted to go. But I had to think of the novel first. The novel is going along A. I., and will, I trust, be finished by the time you arrive. Every night last week I was 'gay,' and every night this week I shall be ditto. But nothing seems able to stop my novel.

Your 'honouring' uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 26.2.23.

I am very glad indeed to hear that you have been doing a lot of work. Strangely enough, this interests me more than all the Universitarian canoeing that seems to constitute all life in those 2 bad climates. I think it was a good thing for you to go to Oxford. Comparisons are always odorous. I shall attend (expect) in the week beginning Mch 11th and your room is approaching completion. I also have been doing an immense amount of work, though the management of the Bank of England is still an enigma to me, and likely to remain so. I gave 2 dinner parties last week and 2 the week before, and I've been to sundry concerts. George Moore was here on Friday and the aged gent was in the greatest form. H.G. and wife are coming to-morrow. I trust that all the encomia and laudations I receive about this house are genuine. If they are it cannot be such a bad sort of house. I am in the last three weeks of my novel which Miss Nerney says is extremely fine, and she ought to know. If it isn't finished by the time you arrive I shall be very disappointed indeed. My health too is very much better. How long this state of affairs will last I know not, but it exists. I think this is about all for the moment. *Your* letter was excessively short.

Your retaliatory uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 5.3.23.

Harriet Cohen is coming to dinner to-morrow night. She is giving a concert on Saturday and is much concerned because all the tickets aren't sold. She and Marjorie Gordon came (separately) for tea yesterday. Seymour Hicks invited me to see his new play on Thursday. The play was appalling, but he was tremendous in it. But then, as usual, he played specially for us. The yacht will shortly begin to be fitted out. I'm going to a ball on Wednesday night, so I shan't do much novel on Thursday. Most distressing, but I couldn't get out of it. I was asked to take the chair at that Oxford meeting of Marie Stopes's. I see myself!

Your wise uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 16.4.23.

I certainly agree that it would be a good thing for you to go abroad—in every way. I hope you will be able to get something to do during the Long Vac. How your daily existence will change! Nevertheless I expect you will enjoy it just as much as the present. Of course there are about 10 million assistant chemists, but if God in his infinite justice has enabled you to show resource, and sturdiness of character, you will soon arise out of the ruck, for these qualities are exceedingly rare. If heaven has decided otherwise—well, you won't. And so that's that. The exams at Cambridge are probably no worse than elsewhere. I doubt not that they are absurd. But it is in the nature of exams to be absurd. I have steadily held this opinion ever since I failed in the Intermediate Ll.B. In the historic year 1888. Ravel came over to London last week to conduct two of his works at a concert at Queen's Hall on Saturday afternoon, and I gave a grand party for him on Saturday evening, at which the high lights were him, George Moore, Louise Alvar, Kathleen Long, Sitwell Bros., Tania, Alfred Sutro, Eugene Goossens. The finest party I ever gave. Finished at 1 a.m. Still, I wrote 1,200 words of my short story the next day. I'm going to Paris again on Thursday for a few days, as I have certain things to arrange there. This is not really the real reason. The real reason is that I didn't have enough Paris last time, and feel I deserve some more. My new Paris shirts arrived by air on Thursday, and Fred has been much struck by their strange beauty. Fred also has been ill—severe chill. I feared he would be in bed for my party, which would have been appalling—I should have had to *hire* a butler—but he wasn't. A noble fellow. He is all right now.

Your migratory uncle.

Hotel Majestic, Paris. 25.4.23.

Mon cher Richard,

Ta lettre m'est arrivée hier au soir. I'm going home again to-morrow. I met 3 friends on the way over and 2 others were staying at this hotel. With which hotel I was somewhat dis-

appointed, as I failed to get the accommodation I wanted, and I couldn't carry my nose in the air because all the good Paris hotels are packed with persons—chiefly American. The Champs Elysées twangs like a banjo with Americans in converse. I shall leave Brigglesea in the M.M. about June 1st and go direct to Southampton. I regard it as highly probable that 75 will be closed on June 1st. I regret for you, but not for myself. I haven't heard anything about the B.N.O.C. season, but I don't expect anything startling from it—unless they do the Rosenkavalier. Look here, having regard to the great weight of your work I should have thought it would be wiser for you not to try to take days off here and there. *I* am taking enough days off for both of us.

Your self amusing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 30.4.23.

I got home on Thursday night after a fantastic and grotesque voyage. 3 trains. Packed steamer (780 passengers). Gale. Ship swept from stem to stern, including bridge. Hundreds of hand-luggages ruined by salt water. Hundreds of persons soaked. Millions sick. Thank God I found shelter under a life boat on the upper deck and did not suffer. After all the ship did the voyage in 60 minutes precisely. I went down to Beaverbrooks for the week-end. The Prime Minister was there, and I assisted at all the secret drama attending the decision whether or not he should retire from business. As for his being ill, well, he played tennis every day. He is a gloomy and self-centred man, but I like him. I am extraordinarily busy, and shall be throughout the summer. This week I am disturbed in my courses by dress rehearsals of "The Insect Play," which in the interests of art and in obedience to Mr. Tayler I positively have to attend. Anyway I'll have a quiet summer or perish in the attempt.

Your foreseeing uncle.

Bonar Law was Prime Minister at this time and he was succeeded by Stanley Baldwin on 22nd May 1923.

75 Cadogan Square. 8.5.23.

I am just getting over an attack of acute neuralgia, sequela of producing the "Insect Play" while trying to write a short story. However, the "Insect Play" is produced, and I shall finish my short story either to-day or to-morrow. Two acts out of three of the "Insect Play" are fine. The first act is rotten. The audience at the first night was what is called brilliant, and I have a sort of an idea that the play will be a failure. Nevertheless it would have been impossible *not* to produce such a play. Believe me, I have had an extremely exhausting ten days.

Your convalescent uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 22.5.23.

Yesterday I drove down to see Mr. F. Swinnerton in his new house (2 ancient cottages) at Cranleigh. It is very nice and highly picturesque with an excellent garden, and he is beginning to furnish it with some taste, and he loves it. It wouldn't quite do for me, however; tiled floors, ancient hearths non-heating, dampish, and I should say infernal in winter. Further, I think he paid too much for it. I went to a music party at Tania's last night. Very good. Magnif operatic singing. It seems to me that your exams start on the very day I join the yacht!

Your anticipatory uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Southampton. 4.6.23.

The weather has been more ghastly even than last year, on account of the extreme cold. All the crew agree that it was colder than at Xmas, and the skipper says he has never known such coldness at any time in the yachting season. Never! East wind. Absolutely biting. 2 undershirts, 1 shirt, 1 w'coat, 1 cardigan, 1 jacket, 1 thickest overcoat. The wind went round from E. to S.W. yesterday morning, of course, just as we set sail from Newhaven for Southampton. We left Newhaven at noon (couldn't leave earlier on account of lack of depth of

liquid) and we got here at 8.30 this morning. Head wind; foul tides. We had a good voyage direct from Brightlingsea to Newhaven, throughout the night—a quiet night—and a bad voyage throughout the night—a noisy night from Newhaven to here. However nobody ill. I've been trying to work but have done very little.

Your floating uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Swanage. 13.6.23.

We put in here yesterday afternoon, our true destination being Weymouth. God knows what time we should have got there with a foul wind and a foul tide. I think that after Weymouth we shall go on to St. Peter Port. We left Southampton at 6.35 on Tuesday morning. Calm. Lovely. Cold. The weather soon went entirely to pieces. This is my 14th day on the yacht, and the weather has never been in the least warm and nearly all the time has been thoroughly bad, as it still is. I worked all last week on an article and yesterday I began further to work on my Prohack play. It appears that that French girl that you got into relations with at Carentec, is married and is expecting a baby and her mother is concurrently expecting another baby.

Your cruising uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Torquay. 2.7.23.

I've been here since Friday morning. We left Weymouth at 8 p.m. on Thursday—an hour too soon for the tide, with the result that we battled against the 5 knot tide round Portland Bill for 50 minutes, without moving. Otherwise the voyage was perfect, and when I woke up we were in Tor Bay, another climate and another weather. Mr. Sullivan is here in his romantic schooner and with his romantic ¼ Peruvian wife. We are all going over to Dartmouth in the Sullivan yacht and we will drive back. It isn't far. I've now finished the first act of the play. I've written part of it 3 times—unusual proceedings

on my part. The weather is on the whole excellent; but the wind never stays in one quarter for more than ½ a day. It was N.E. last night and is W this morning. Sea like glass. But we are in the harbour. I doubt not that your boat captaincy post has many real responsibilities. Mais il faut souffrir pour être illustre. At the moment I am in a perfect fever lest the women should be late for the launch to catch the schooner. I know I shall have a hades of a time to get them off this ship to time. Mrs. Patrick Campbell is coming for lunch to-morrow.

Your entertaining uncle.

During the Long Vacation I went to Birchenwood Colliery, North Staffordshire, to gain experience in the coal mine and among the surface plant.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Ostend. 16.7.23.

My dear Collier,

The news is good, and I am very glad about it; but you have my sympathies concerning this subterranean life in July and August. I should not dream of bringing you over to the frivolities of Ostend in these circumstances. When I am idle, it now pleases me to think: "At any rate Richard is working." I should think this colliery work will be an excellent thing. The weather has pretty well broken up here. A powerful S.W. wind, white-headed yellow sea, and clouds of dust blowing over the yacht basin when it isn't raining. I admit that it seems generally to clear up before noon. Also that the wind in its violence is nevertheless warm. It took us 60 or 61 hours to get here from Southampton. Mr. Sullivan's schooner did exactly the same journey in 26 hours. But he has twin propellers and less beam. Also his ship is not so comfortable. Still, he beat us by about a million lengths. There are a number of yachts in the basin; his and mine are the best. The Medusa, enormous, is outside, and her crew fill the streets of a night. I'm not working much but I'm working a bit. On Friday or Saturday Percy Jowett is coming, and I propose, under God,

to do a week's painting with him. With the exchange at 92, I find we can go out and spend all morning in spending and ride home and round about in cabs, and still return with some slight change out of a sovereign.

Your *coke* consuming uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Ostend. 26.7.23.

We are now stuck here by feverish and obstinate weather. Mr. Sullivan has started out twice (most foolishly) and each time has had to return, and my crew is very unchristianly amused and Mr. Sullivan unchristianly infuriated thereby. I've done 2 water colours (both awful) with P. Jowett Esq., who is an A.I. man. I've *not* bathed. I've written an article. I've been very exhausted by insomnia. Otherwise grand health. I should ask you for some of those fotos. But you know my disinterest in fotos as art works. You might send me a print of the best one.

Your unsettled uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Southampton. 6.8.23.

I have had no address for a week. I packed off my party from Ostende by mail steamer on Monday afternoon and hoped to leave myself at evensong. But the weather was imposs. I was kept at Ostende tout seul till Thursday morning, when we *did* leave—6.50. All right for 7 hours. Then a storm, rainbows, thunderings, squalls, blacknesses, heavy seas, hard head wind. We had to run for shelter to the Downs (where 16 other ships had sheltered). It blew like hades all Thursday night, all Friday, and most of Friday night. We left on Saturday morn. Lovely, but a head wind. We *tacked all day Saturday*. Dead calm at night. Engineer Edgar did 18 hours continuous duty. At 5 a.m. yesterday, lo! a fair wind! Our first for at least 5 or 6 weeks. We bowled along. Reached here at 5.45 last night. Ship cleaning and varnishing to-day. Start to-morrow afternoon for Cowes. Yes, I expect pit work is very heavy going. How-

ever, it helps you to understand not only commercial chemistry but miners' strikes, doesn't it? Tania will be a handful on board, I lay! She has already demanded in writing that I lay in a stock of rose water and charcoal biscuits!

Your heated uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Swanage. 19.8.23.

In the matter of our correspondence I should say that I write 2,000 words to your 1,000. This is very wrong. I set out from Southampton (having debarked Tania & Co.) with Mr. Tayler and Gilbert Hare (the actor) on Thursday morn last, and it was heavenly, and Master Gilbert was ravished. But in the Solent the weather totally changed, and so did Mr. G. H. Not that he was seasick. But he caught a chill on his liver. We had to put in here, out of the storm. The ship horribly rolled. Mr. G. H. was in acute pain and in a high state of nerves. He feared the ship was in danger! Lord Inchcape's 450 ton 'Rover' also put in here for shelter and rolled more than we did. As Mr. G. H.'s nerves and liver did not improve, he said he thought he ought to return to London and I let him. In fact we saw him off at the stazione yesterday. He is of my age, but about 15 years older. Charming fellow, very learned in theatres and racecourses. We have rolled here now for 60 hours. Getting off in the launch on Friday and getting aboard again was extremely difficult, owing to the roll. The launch was nearly smashed to pieces. Yesterday it was easier. To-day we shall go to Poole and to-morrow, there, we shall pick up Pauline Smith and Miss Nerney, and then try to go Westward. I may let the yacht for September. I have had a sort of offer of £350 for it for that month—rather good but naught is settled. I am rather glad you are working. It reassures me. And it is infinitely better than Cowesing and Le Touqueting generally, though less pleasant at the moment. You will have learnt something. I have now got over my insomnia and am working normally again.

Your restored uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 7.9.23.

Tania played the enormous Symphonic Variations (piano and orch.) of Bax last night at the Promenade Concert, and had a very rousing reception indeed: which she well deserved. She and her band came here afterwards—A. Bax, Bacharach, Stephanie (surname unknown), Tania's younger sister, Efgar Myers, husband ditto, and a Dane I've never seen before. The girls stole every rose I had in the house, and left after midnight with their cavaliers. Still, I am in great form for work today. Harold Hales (the original of "The Card"), is coming to tea to-day. I need not say he has asked himself. He would. He is now home from the East and is writing short stories. He writes really rather well.

Middlemen v. producer. Middlemen make more money, sometimes: but for an interesting life, I say producer every time. It depends what you want. To do something worth doing, or to be a parasite on the producers. Your education must be completed, job waiting or no job waiting. I don't see you undergoing a 5 year apprenticeship beginning at the age of 23.

Your reflective uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 15.9.23.

I do not follow, or rather follow but do not agree with your argument in favour of irregularity in letter writing. If you are going to conduct your business in this manner, disturbing necessary routine because you have something else to do, you will either be a millionaire or a failure. I don't mind your flying from Manchester to London or wherever it is you want to fly to and from, but don't blame me if you crash near Dunstable and get killed or maimed or your facial charm impaired for ever. For myself I have no intention of flying for a long time yet. Some people seem to love it; others say that the discomforts are frightful. What keeps me off, however, is the mere danger. Think what the sensation of the newspaper placards would be, and, still more important, think of the irreparable loss to the

world, if I figured fatally in an air crash. No, I will walk first. Still *you* can do as you like. I am now in full work again and I have finished the 1st act (again) of my new play. Anyhow it is a great improvement on the first version. I am now on the 2nd act. I have had much insomnia, and some neuralgia, but am now looking up a bit. I'm going to dance tonight at one of my clubs. I went to the 1st night of "Our Betters" on Wednesday. It was a terrible experience. Harry Preston has been very ill—prostrate (I mean the organ). I may go down to see him. I have a new cook. She seems all right: but I have to correct her tendency to the delusion that *she* is going to run me. This, I flatter myself I can do.

Your productive uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.9.23.

Fred returned last night. He says the tenants of the yacht were very nice, and very pleased with the cruise, despite the awful weather. They have given presents all round, and to Fred a silver cigarette case inscribed with the name of the yacht. He has told me all about our collision with the s.y. Lautana in Dartmouth harbour. It appears that owing to the M.M's bottom being so fouled with weed she wouldn't answer her helm properly: which doesn't surprise me. But there had been no chance to scrape her. The collision might well have been much more serious. Jesse saved the dinghy by getting it inboard with the speed of lightning. The captain is depressed, in spite of my messages to him not to be. I'm going on steadily with my play, but I've had some terrible nights. Going to bad plays gives me bad nights. I mean dull plays. I saw "Ambush" on Monday. So meritorious and so tedious. I saw "Robert E. Lee" last night. So praiseworthy and so dull. I'm going to "Hassan" tomorrow night. That ought to be very good indeed. I've told Fred and Miss Nerney to prepare for your advent.

Your trembling uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 29.10.23.

I was highly pleased by Squire's review in the Spectator yesterday. I am sending you a copy of that book. As for Churchill, I glance at him in the Times now and then, but he disturbs not my tranquillity. Well, I think I discern signs of improvement in the weather. My health, under God, is restored and seems even to be steadily improving. But I have had to put the play on one side and turn to an urgent article on games, which is needed for "The Royal." Not that I know anything of games or have a single idea in my head on games at this instant (10 a.m.). I'm just off to a rehearsal. I was at Ciro's last night, and enjoyed the society of the Aga Khan and Phillips Oppenheim. Tonight I go out with Tania. This afternoon Marjorie Gordon is coming for tea. And so it goes on. Difficult to believe that I ever work! Still, I do. I don't tell you of the invitations I refuse. That is a dark chapter. I am just in the middle of Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico." This is the most astonishing thing I ever read. No wonder Keats called Cortes 'stout.' Cortes wanted gunpowder and sulphur therefor. "Go up that volcano. You'll find plenty of sulphur in the crater," said Cortes to some of his men. They did. The volcano was Popocatepetl, in action, 17,000 feet high. He had 600 men and with them took the entire Aztec empire of millions of civilised people. His men said: "We are going back home. We aren't going into the interior." "Oh, aren't you!" said Cortes, and burnt all the ships. "And now what are you going to do about it?" said he. Some book! And I'm only ½ way through it.

Your exuberant uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 3.11.23.

"The Great Adventure" is coming on next at the Haymarket: which in itself is a great and immense worry, especially as the diplomatic Harrison and the diplomatic Me cannot agree about the casting of the chief female part therein. I'm going to a swagger dinner tonight, and I don't know how I shall get through it—unless between nose-wipings. Also I'm trying to work.

Your opprest uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 5.11.23.

This is the
way you write. Thanks
for your letter. I heard
about your weather.
Yes I was
at the 1st night. It went
off fairly well. Ervine has left
the "Observer" for good. He is now
at the beginning of 2 years
travelling round about the world.
It is a pity he has
left the "Observer." I wrote a
4,000 word article about games
last week, and I ought to write
a story this week , but I know
I shan't. 2 dress rehearsals and
one first night followed by a supper
laid me a bit low . Nevertheless
my health , apart from sleep ,
is marvellous

Your spatial uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 10.11.23.

My belief is that I have had, and still have, a very slight flu. Anyhow I possess a queer feeling all over and a funny head, and I can't smoke more than ½ a cigarette at a time without nausea. This is most distressing. Also my sleep is broken. Otherwise my health is good. But the alleged flu is obstinate. Perhaps it's only a determined chill. It doesn't stop me from transacting business, but it stops me from working, and I have an enormous amount to do. I hope the exam will be all right. If it isn't, Xmas will be spoilt and Paris ruined. I've spent

2 evenings running with Tania: concerts. She is certainly not well. She never is, so far as that goes. I am much worried, as Hilda Trevelyan cannot be got in time for "The Great Adventure," and Harrison wants to postpone it. He can't postpone it without my permission, however. The newspaper statement that "Riceyman Steps" is to be dramatised is totally false. I have been asked to write a life of President Wilson for the great American public. You may be startled to know that I have refused so to do.

Your influenced uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.11.23.

I've just got back from Beaverbrook's, where I wrote 3,900 words of a story from Saturday eve to Monday morning, and where I had the advantage or disadvantage of consorting with Austen Chamberlain, Birkenhead, and Ll. G., not to mention Lord Wargrave, Sir Edward Hulton (now retired) and Evelyn Fitzgerald (engaged to Helen Drury). I never heard principles or the welfare of the country mentioned. And see 'em all squinting askance at me when they said anything to judge what effect they were making on me and fearing my fountain pen. Still, I had a great lark. "Arnold," said Max to me this morning, while I sat in his bathroom as he laved his limbs, "You've seen hell with the lid off." Well, I had. I have a big dinner here to-night of theatrical personages connected with the Lyric to hear John Drinkwater read the libretto of his new "Burns" opera.

I salute thee,
Your productive uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 27.11.23.

I only handled your letter today. I've wasted 3 days at Brighton in a vain attempt to settle some delicate theatrical business, and am accordingly somewhat pernicketty tonight. You seem to me to be doing a great deal too much non-exam

work to be at all sure of the exam. *I* don't know; but that's how it strikes my plain mind. My seance with the dentist took 3 minutes from me and one tooth. No blood. No discomfort. Nothing. The weather here is awful; but it was lovely at Brighton, and Harry Preston was in his most hospitable form. He must lose on all my visits. Still, it's his affair or funeral. He seems to be *quite* restored to health, but I don't think he is. *My* work is not going along at all well. In fact I'm rather like you, and have time for everything except my work. This will have to be altered.

Your worried uncle.

P.S. The reception of R. Steps continues to be immense.

1924

Olympia Dance Hall

"Outward Bound"

"Iolanthe"

Judging the Hassan Ball

"The Way of the World"

Tories

Spain

"The Great Adventure"

"London Life"

Yachting

"Mr. Prohack" completed

Genoa

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.1.24.

I do not think that you have made an unfavourable impression in Paris. "The Maid of Orleans" is the best boat. It was that ship that entered Dover Harbour at the same moment as the M.M. did, about 2 years ago. She seemed to be striding right over us, at a terrific pace. She shook us and the next moment she was standing at the quay. These ships may be said to be handled. It is a pity you couldn't see anything better than Olympia and the Casino de Paris. When I was at the former last Easter some of the women wore strictly nothing at all: which had a certain interest but only for a moment. I was marvellously bored. Don't let Harry Preston stand you too many drinks, please. I wonder that his hospitality has not put him into the bankruptcy court. I am now working again. I went to Claridge's and danced on Sunday night and still had neuralgia. On N.Y. Eve I went to the Albert Hall Ball, and succeeded in getting home before 2, which was rather good. It was a vast show; but very very few of the costumes were any good; the noise was fantastic, and the band, though very good, sounded but vaguely in the outlying parts of the floor. Before that ball I dined at Lady Colefax's. On New Year's Night I dined at Ethel Sands. Last night with Mr. Doran. Tonight I dine at Sinclair Lewis's. Tomorrow with Marjorie Gordon. However, I am working daily, and have nearly finished another long article. Uncle Sam Barlow died on Tuesday morning at 9.30. I am not going to the funeral.

Your New Yearish uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 14.1.24.

I went to Olympia Dance Hall on Saturday. It is very good, and well organised and proletarian. I estimate that the floor is 250 feet by 125 ft. The lemonade at the soda fountain is A.1. I gave up 3 articles at the cloak room. The girl made a calcula-

tion and told me that the total charge was 2d. This is the sort of thing that appeals to me. "Riceyman Steps" looks like being a real success. The Times Book Club is circulating 1,800 copies of it.

Your impecunious uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 29.1.24.

Your letter arrived by last post last night. Doubtless the strike. It takes me a long time to teach you some of the elements of social politeness. I have certainly told you at least twice before that when you receive a letter containing money it ought to be acknowledged at once. Cheques are stolen, their endorsements forged, etc. I hope you will remember this rule. In this and in other matters your defect is that damnable midland casualness which you will have to cure and which is not easy to cure. It is the last act of "Outward Bound" that is so poor, and if you saw it again you would perceive the poor quality of the humour throughout. That sample joke: "My husband is there? Then it *is* hell" is really very feeble. Still, the play does hold you for 2 acts anyhow. Of course the life led by the average undergraduate considered *physically*, is merely fatuous. And only young constitutions could stand its insensate negation of common prudence. Not that I care. I went to the 1st night of Lehar's "Three Graces" on Saturday. Empire. Vast audience. Très chic. The 'movements,' all of them, were well represented. The mus. comedy was simply awful in dullness. It was worse even than "The Merry Widow," which was one of the silliest and gloomiest entertainments that never entertained me. On Saturday many people slipped away after the 2nd act. I did. Yet many papers said it was received with enthusiasm. The audience was fantastically bored. I'm not going to any more 1st nights for a long time, except "The Way of the World." J'en ai plein le dos. I don't know what I've been doing lately; but not much anyhow. I'm writing a rather good short story about Elsie. The W. B. Maxwells, Mrs. E. Phillpotts, Hubert Griffith dine here this even. Ethel Sands is painting me a screen for the dining room. I have got over the neuralgia, but don't sleep as I should.

Your improving uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 5.2.24.

Dear Sir and Richard,

Thanks for your late letter. I suppose you have a notion (not *wholly* unjustifiable) that you are doing miracles and wonders of organising and vital fulness; and I have no doubt that all this is an excellent education for you—indeed really valuable. Still, exams will be exams. My own poor existence is also fairly complex and overcharged. I should like to do something for Clare Coll. Mag., but I am already in arrear with free work promised, and I must catch up. I doubt if we'll come up for the Greek play. I feel I have had enough of Greek play in this world. Moreover I prefer to come to Cambridge when the climate is less austere. I went last night as guest of Mr. Sullivan to 1st of G. S. season at Princes. "Iolanthe." I think the first act of this is as good as any of them: but not the second. The production as usual is very ugly and old-fashioned. Despite all his faults Lytton is still easily the best of the troupe. Jessie Bond was in the audience. She played Iolanthe in the original produck (1880 something). She is 71. Afterwards I was led to the Savoy for supper, which place I left, after dancing, at 1 a.m. I can't think now of all the other wonderful things I've been doing of late. I know I've done everything except sleep. The judging business at the Hassan Ball was very tedious and trying. Otherwise the Ball all right. Home before 2. Oh, I know! I was taken all over the secret parts of the Savoy Hotel last Friday after a great lunch offered to me (alone) by the directors of the said Enterprise.

Your sated uncle.

This luncheon is obviously the germ of the idea of writing a novel covering the activities of a great hotel, which idea A.B. brought to completion in his last novel "Imperial Palace."

75 Cadogan Square. 11.2.24.

The first night of "The Way of the World" was a very great success and the receipts so far are fine. Of course I knew the play was good—indeed magnif—but I was equally sure that it would be an absolute frost. So that I owe apologies to Nigel. Edith Evans has made the play from the public point of view. At the time of the photographing at the Hassan Ball I was fantastically bored, because Lord Terrington, the husband of Lady Terrington, one of the judges, would keep interfering. However I got him away. But Sybil Thorndike was equally trying for another reason—nervousness and too much sense of responsibility. I tried to persuade her that it didn't matter who got the prizes, but failed. Your friend Ernest Thesiger got the first prize. I have had lots of neuralgia and lots more boredom. I went to a performance of "Macbeth" on Sabbath night which was simply infernal. This is all, but a much longer letter than yours. If I told you all that I have to get through and diplomatise upon—well, you wouldn't believe me.

Your somnolent uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 25.2.24.

Your work seems to be too much in the background. What I think about your prospects is as follows. I doubt if you have a very special bent towards any *branch* of applied science, and that is why I encouraged you to browse for qualifications here and there instead of going in a straight line. Of course I attach little importance to formal qualifications, but they serve a certain purpose—classificatory labels etc. I think that unless you make an ass of yourself, which seems to me improbable, you will succeed in whatever branch presents itself to you, provided of course you don't yield to constitutional idleness. I think you will be able to manage *people*, and from an educational point of view therefore I do not regret all this Captain of the Boats business—in fact I applaud it as highly educational in addition to being amusing. But if I were you I should cut out balls

entirely for the present. I have not much hope of "Kate," which I go to see tonight. It is a batch of old English tunes strung together on a story which I fear is very feeble, being the product of 3 amateurs, 2 of them aged. I fear the stage will be too full, and that the production will cost a great deal too much ever to pay. But there are some good artists: Ranalow and Marjorie Gordon. "The Way of the World" is a most prodigious and startling success. Nobody can be more surprised than I am. I went to the 1st of the Shaw plays in the 1st cycle, but had to sleep. It was terrible. I think this is the general opinion. I wouldn't go to any more. And I doubt if I shall go to "Joan of Arc"; but perhaps I shall. I went to a great musical party at Tania's last Wednesday. Tania had a temperature of 101, and defied her doctor, who came at 11.30 to send her to bed. I left then, so I don't know if he succeeded. She is playing at a concert in conjunction with Beatrice Harrison tomorrow night. I shall be present. I have recently made the acquaintance of Armstrong Gibbs, one of your Cambridge professional nuts in the musical line. He is a delightful red-haired youth, and it is possible that he may do something for the Lyric. He professes at the R. Coll. of Music. I have been somewhat cast down by overwork, but I have got over it. I resume overwork tomorrow. That's me.

Your renascent uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.3.24.

In the last 3 nights I have had a total of 18 hours sleep. Such a thing has not happened before in my memory. If I got 6 hours sleep *unbroken* I could defeat the entire world. I am told that I certainly shall get it. The difficulty between Beaverbrook and me has ended in his giving in. The point was whether I should go to him or he come to me. He came, for lunch on Friday, and stayed 2½ hours, and I must say he was very interesting especially on the newspaper trusts. When I asked him "Well Max, how is your Tory party getting on?" his reply was: "Baldwin is an idiot. Austen has sciatica. And Horne is taking dancing lessons." This reply ought to become historic. I had

a long yarn with Donald Calthrop the other day—he came for lunch to take advice about altering "Kate." He began with Shakspere in October. Next he went in for the most piffling farce. Then a musical comedy. And now dashed if he isn't playing "Box and Cox" at the Coliseum! Snow here this morning, but fast melting. Tania dines here tonight. She is vastly overworked and pathetically tired and ill. Her concert was magnif.

Your philosophic uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 18.3.24.

You can take Yadil easily enough if you take it in pill form. But I find that if I hold my nose while taking it in liquid form, and until I have well masticated and swallowed a bit of bread, I taste very little of it. We certainly cannot have a gramophone dance on Friday April 4th. I detest gramophone dances, which remind me of studios and other dreadful places of alleged gaiety. But I don't mind having a proper dance, with a professional band of 2 persons—provided that you see to all the organising of it under my superintendence. It will cost money, but I shall be much relieved to have some such thing here as I am always being worried to have it, and have always refused because I jib at the trouble and also at the disturbance of my rooms. You had better write to me as to this by return of post. I suppose we could hold about 40 people, couldn't we? I tired myself out by writing 2 short stories in a fortnight and have done nothing except oddments since Sunday. This morning I felt exceeding queer, and couldn't diagnose the case till about an hour ago, when I suddenly perceived with blinding clarity that it was a chill in the head due to sitting in some draughty taxi. I take a party to "The Gondoliers" tonight, Rupert Carte having planted down 4 free stalls for me, despite the fact that he sells out every night. Rather noble of him! Tomorrow night Mr. Knoblock's new play 1st night, as to which I fear the worst. Somerset Maugham dined here last night. Perhaps you read his short story "Rain." He lent the proofs of this story to

a man in a hotel in Los Angeles, and the next day the man (film person) asked permission to dramatise it. S.M. agreed on a 50-50 basis. It has been the greatest New York success and is expected to run in big cities for 7 or 8 years. In 18 months S.M's share of the plunder has been £9,000, and he expects to clear between £35,000 and £40,000 out of it before its vogue is exhausted. All for nothing. This is what I call business. The story itself is very good indeed, but I have heard that the play is awful.

Your slothful uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 24.3.24.

I have been asked to see the Boat Race from the Herberts' ("A.P.H.," "Punch") house, but I doubt if I shall go at all, as I shall be exhausted after the dance. It is not the dance but the responsibilities thereof that will exhaust me. I assume that you will be Boat-Club-dining on Boatrace day-night. I've just been lunching with Charles B. Cochran, who is full of his arrangements for bringing over to Wembley his "Rodeo." It is costing him 100,000 dollars to bring the show over (Atlantic Transport line). I drove down for the day yesterday to the Atkinses. It was chiefly wet, but there were four different sweets at lunch, all of which I partook of; so the day was not wasted. Then a new play at the Aldwych. Some fullness of a day. This morn I started to write my new play. The strike has not yet upset me. There are fewer taxis, but as there were 2 many before, this is all right. I go to Wembley on Friday on a visit of inspection and it is possible I may write a flaming article thereon. Tonight I dine at the Colefaxes, the gent who is presiding over the Strike Enquiry. I should think this is the sort of thing he can do pretty well; in private life he is on the dull side—especially at my dinners. Still, I like him. Preparations for *both* my plays are now proceeding, and a hades of a time lieth before me. The 1st night of Mr. Knoblock's "Conchita" was excessively painful, a perfect frost, and deservedly so. The worst was that I had to go to the author's afterwards to

supper. Conversation un peu difficile. People will, however, say what a clever young man *I* am, to write such a brilliant play as "London Life" with the author of such a sad puerile mess as "Conchita." Nevertheless I was most distressed for Knoblock, who as you know, is one of my most beloved friends.

Your lately harrowed uncle.

Seville, Spain. Picture Postcard. Easter Sunday 1924

Thanks for letter. I feared I should never get it (yesterday afternoon). Going to a cock fight now (1 p.m.) and to *the* bull fight at 5 p.m.

A. B.

Hotel Ritz, Madrid. 23.4.24.

I had 12 hours in the train yesterday and am today enfeebled, though the train was very smooth and punctual. Heat intense. I had 2 hours of bull fight on Easter Sunday, and have written thereon for "The Express." I think it is an over-rated performance, but not more cruel than various English amusements with animals. The horses are doped, must be. See them lifted high by the bull and part with the whole of their digestive apparatus and walk calmly off! Of course if the ring wasn't so huge, the spectacle might be more offensive. In 2 hours 8 bulls and 20 horses passed more or less calmly away. There have been grand dinners and dances in Seville over Easter given by rival plutocrats, Max, and a Spanish fellow named Pendraza. Hence I have not lately been on the top of my form. Nevertheless I have, on a holiday, written 5 articles in 10 days. As we shall be so near the celebrated and yet mysterious Basque Provinces at the frontier tomorrow morning I am determined to see the same, whatever the Max party may do. My official contract with them ends tonight. It has been very exciting, luxurious, and costly. I reckon that the affair can't have cost

Max less than £1,500, and perhaps £2,000. Unfortunately he wasn't able to get all the special railway coaches he wanted. The Cie Intle de Wagons-Lits was willing enough, but the Spanish railways said they couldn't drag them so we only had one. We may have another tonight. I don't expect I shall be finally home till about May 3. You see I shall pass through Paris, which is always an uncertain business.

Your travelled uncle.

Fuenterrabia. 30.4.24.

I've had no address for a week. I don't know how the rumour started that Knob, Dean and I had gone away together to re-write the play. We haven't done either and shan't. We added a few words to 2 scenes; but that was done one afternoon about a month ago. I'm going home on Friday. I always wanted to see the Basque provinces, and now I am seeing them, and they are well worth it—both for cities and scenery. My articles, I hear, have started in the Daily Express, so I needn't write them over again here. I could write something acutely funny about the frontier arrangements. This place is on the frontier, and you can go to France either by road, rail, or boat. The formalities by rail are merely fantastic; but all is done with smiles and courtesy. I've been 3 times to France in 3 days. Bayonne yesterday. Bayonne is quite Spanish, though about 17 miles beyond the frontier. At one place in the exterior of the cathedral the walls form a right angle. Here is painted up a notice: "It is forbidden to play pelota here or to deposit excrement." Pelota is the great Basque game, and a very fine one undoubtedly. There are more pelota courts than bull rings round here. I should say a full sized court is about 200 feet in length. We have had heavenly weather till yesterday. Today it is pouring. The Beaverbrooks have gone on. I am reposing, after writing articles and do nothing except a few sketches. I shall be in London on Saturday or Sunday night, and thenceforward until I go aboard the yacht I shall probably have an exceedingly lively and anxious time. I think this is about all for you. I

hope the Geology is now in full swing, and the scarcely less important Henleyism.

Your homing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 14.5.24.

I will be vice president of the Cambridge University Staffordshire Society with pleasure, but only on the clear understanding that it involves me in no responsibilities, no duties, no ceremonies, no dinners, of any kind. I am obliged to make this condition.

Yours,

A. B.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 6.6.24.

I am informed that "The Great Adventure" was a very good success last night. Mr. Knoblock and I went to Drury Lane, where "London Life" seems to me to have the making of a success in it.

Your dead uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 9.6.24.

As regards finance you have certainly been spending too much. However, you are now leaving the Univ, and you will henceforward have to cut your coat according to your cloth, so that I shall probably have an easier time. Don't assume that those plays will succeed. I am not at all sure about either of them. I never take any serious notice of first night enthusiasms. I have been at work most of Whitsuntide. Of course *my own* work is about 2½ months in arrear—what with Spain and rehearsals and after-production arrangements. I might go to Hurlingham this afternoon, but I don't know. Weather very capricious. Tonight for a change I am going to bed.

Your recovering uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Dieppe. 13.8.24.

I've had no mail for 5 days, and it has all cascaded on to me this afternoon, so I am getting a bit tired and my neuralgia is not improving, especially as the weather is very thundery and showery and the new milk has turned for tea. The Keebles reciprocate your kindly message. *He* is a *very* live wire, and she is placid, charming, and acquiescent. We left Ryde at 6 p.m. Monday, and had a perfect, regular, and smooth voyage, with favouring wind and no engine till within a few miles of Dieppe. I have never known such a thing happen before. Just outside Dieppe heavy rain. The voyage took 20 hours but we had to hang about outside afterwards for a long time, for the tide, and weren't berthed till 9 p.m. Sunday and Monday were great days, and we saw fine racing on Saturday and Monday, including (1) a collision, and (2) the Shamrock breaking her topmast. Dieppe is full, and full of interest and I am exhausted with neuralgia but not minding it too much.

Your martyrised uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Boulogne. 20.8.24.

Neuralgia gone. Work just beginning to be resumed—feebly. Weather appalling. At Dieppe the glass fell to 29.25, but we started calmly on Saturday night for Boulogne. We continued calmly enough till within a few miles of Boulogne (Sunday morning) when the glass was justified of its work. In jibing over to make the entrance the mizzenboom broke in 2 like a match. Yet it is 7 ins. in diameter and the sail was reefed! Thenceforward, the gale! It is a little calmer now (Wednesday morn) but the rain is heavier. Of course we are stuck here. Happily the port is very interesting, if noisy; and there are circuses, casinos and things. The industry and cacophony of the quays of the port of Boulogne are terrific. The daughter and son-in-law of Sir F. K. left yesterday. Married 2 months, très sympathiques. Lady K. left yesterday by steamer to fulfil a broadcasting engagement tonight in London, and she will

return here tomorrow. After which I trust we may sail, somewhere. I have to be in London on Thursday night, for an appointment on Friday and I swear I won't rejoin the yacht again this year. I must say I find Sir F. K. very interesting in the matter of worldly wisdom. He gets wildly wrong sometimes, but in the main he is instructive. Lillah is charming and fairly obedient—more so than most. "The Great Adventure" is keeping up well. I shall now hope, trust, presume, and assume that from next week you will devote all your energies to finding a job—and successfully. But not *any* job! No!............ Never stay too long in one situation. If you do you are in a trap. Not 1 employer in 1,000 has bowels.

Your convalescent uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Brightlingsea. 26.8.24.

The season endeth tomorrow with an excursion up the Blackwater. Home Thursday. We had a fantastic and grotesque week in Boulogne. One long gale, shower, thunderstorm. Even when we did get out, on Sunday morning, we had to engage a tug to pull us out, as the wind had shifted and was blowing straight in between the piers. We took shelter in the Downs at 2 p.m. Sunday, after splendid going. We couldn't have got to Brightlingsea that night. And we didn't get here last night either. Yesterday morn the wind had most thoughtfully changed to N.W., right in our teeth! We tacked across the Thames estuary all day and anchored within about 7 miles of B'sea at dark, and came along in this morning. The customs have just been and found naught. The Keebles are ashore telephoning to friends; But I have my stand-by, Miss Nerney, and so I feel easier in my mind. I have suffered a very great deal from neuralgia—largely the weather I imagine—and I am rather crotchetty, though it would be idle to deny that I behave with much nobility under stress.

Your withstanding uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 1.9.24.

Be not cast down. A month seems a long time to you, especially in Rochdale, but in the sight of God, me, and Simon Carve it may amount to less. Possibly the principals of some of these great firms are on holiday. Keep on writing to them. Worry them. Remind them that you exist. You are bound to get a job soon—in my opinion, (and I am astonishingly wise). This week I am overthrown with work owing to two special articles for U.S.A. which I have promised to do. I am having a great argument and negotiation with the McClure syndicate about a weekly article for a year. Their present star turn, Wells, is just closing his contract. They want another star, and of course there is only me. These articles are published all over the world and are largely political. They gave Wells 30,000 dols. for a weekly article of 1,000 words. I told them I was worth less than Wells in the market and that I would do the job for 26,000 dols a year. They offered me 18,000, 20,000, and 21,000. In vain! Then they said could I do 2 sample articles at 500 dollars each, my price, for them to judge? So I am doing them at once. But I don't think they will rise to my price for the series, and if they don't I certainly shan't descend one dollar towards theirs. "The Great Adventure" is doing better and better. I went down to Arundel yesterday. It is a *most wonderful* part of the country.

Your striving uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 8.9.24.

"The Great Adventure" is doing far better than ever; but there is a risk that, on a/c of previous contracts (which Harrison was fully entitled to make when the receipts of the "G.A." fell below the agreed level), of it being taken off or transferred. As, however, Harrison is at the present time making himself £350 a week clear out of it, I doubt if he will really meddle with it! I was at the 100th pfce. Faber had greatly improved.

Your now settled down uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 16.9.24.

You must now accustom yourself to the ways of the world, and remember that you will be able, when you have secured a job, to spend what you earn and not more. This will be something of a change for you, but your affair will be to improve it as quickly as poss., and in the meantime it is an absolutely necessary discipline—self-discipline I mean. Don't imagine yourself hardly done-by. There was an uncle of yours named Arnold who lived on 25/- a week at your age and bought books. Say that 25/- then was worth 50/- now. Add a £1 for your more expensive tastes, and you will see what you really need.

Your exemplary uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 18.9.24.

I think that you would make a pretty good organiser. But surely you do not imagine that a man of 50 or 60 will "obviously have to finish soon." You are making a noise like a very young man. But it is all right. Let me hear from you always immediately you have any news to impart.

Your uncle aged 57 1/3.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 22.9.24.

I have had some bad nights; but I am writing another new play. This is the 3rd play that is in process of composition. I am about to write some more articles for the "Sunday Pictorial." Rothermere, whom I met at Ciro's, said he wanted to talk with me, so he came to lunch last Tuesday, but this had nothing to do with the articles. Nor did he say anything very interesting, except that presents to his nieces and sisters cost him £30 or 40,000 a year, and that the house he has just sold had 17 bathrooms. God save us all.

Your agitated uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 29.9.24.

Extreme haste. I am in fullest work with my play and have many other things on my mind. Beaverbrook rang me up on Friday to tell me that your Auntie Marguerite had written a little book about me, biographical; and that a literary agent had offered the serial rights to the "Express." I told him he might as well publish it, because if he didn't somebody else would and I would prefer it to be published by a friend who could keep an eye on it. He has read it and says it's all praise. I am working very well, but am not without neuralgia.

Your employed uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 10.10.24.

Here is £5 for you to do what you like with on your birthday. No questions asked. Also I send you my best wishes for a righteous and felicitous future of much length.

Your overworked uncle.

The following letter was written to me just as I was setting off to take up my first industrial appointment with Lever Brothers Ltd.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 24.11.24.

My dear Rich,

Neuralg
Hard work
£10
Good luck
Your aff unc

A.B.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 9.12.24.

I am on the last 4 days of the "Prohack" play, and I shall thank all the Holy Trinity when it is done. Tania had lunch with me on Sunday and Reeves-Smith gave a grand dinner at Claridge's on Sunday night at which I was present. You wrote me rather a poor letter. So this one is brief.

Your hasting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.12.24.

I leave Victoria 9 a.m. Sunday and shall go as far as Genoa in "The Blue Train." After that, nothing is decided in my brain. I hope that something will turn up for you at Lever's of a more important nature. I suppose that as usual "it will all depend on yourself." Anyhow you are in what is obviously an A.1. show. Knob and I have not finished the play. I was about ½ way through the last act on Wednesday afternoon when my doubts about the construction suddenly "precipitated," and I saw every grain of them. I at once telephoned to K. to come and see me. He came. I explained at length why I thought the play wouldn't do. He agreed. We scrapped 1½ acts. By 12.45 today we had reconstructed everything to our joint satisfaction. But the play won't be finished till after my return, as I am not going to work on it abroad. I had lunch with Lord Beaverbrook today. He is going to Nice and is insistent that I should join him there for a few days. I may. I am now recovering from my fatigue—thanks to the break in the play. But I have neuralgia daily for a few hours.

Your departing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 22.12.24.

Sir and dear Rich,

I enclose a Xmas gift for you to the extent of £5. Also best wishes to all for the Seasons. I am in Italy, but know not where.

Your aff. unc.

Hotel Miramare, Gênes. 24.12.24.

Been so busy being idle that I've had not time to scrivere epistolari. Seen various people que je connais et passé qq. jiorni avec eux. Domani (I think) I shall go to Naples where are other friends. I think it will be a good thing to travel on Xmas Day. I leave here at 12.5 (noon) get to Rome at 9.30 p.m. and take the midnight sleeper—treno di lusso—por Napoli, Dove arriverai a sei ore del mattino. That is if I can get accommodation on the trains: ce qui n'est pas sûr; mais le concierge se coupe en quatre pour m'avoir ce qu'il me faudra. It is a very long time since I had such weather. There *are* a few clouds in the sky today but not in front of the sun. This is the 9th (no, 10th) day of continuous sunshine and warmth. No overcoat. Xmas in Italian is called "Natale." And there are fairs at which all kinds of bright and futile objects are sold to enliven the Xmas home. Genoa is a wonderful city. I came here 1st in the yacht; then in the car; and now I am here by train. I like it far better than ever. I wonder how long a holiday you are having. I trust you are preparing, on N.Y. day, to turn over a new leaf and be a wiser and a better man etc. etc. etc. etc. I often have horrid dreams of fear that you may prove to be a bit on the idle side. So far as I know I shall be at the Excelsior Hotel, Naples till about the 3rd Jany 1925; but rien n'est sûr.

Your voyaging uncle.

1925

NAPLES

A FIRST NIGHT

PNEUMONIA

"THE OBSERVER," "PICTORIAL" AND "HOME CHAT"

"DANCING MOTHERS"

THE KIT KAT CLUB

"LORD RAINGO"

SALZBURG

REINHARDT

"THE GOLD RUSH"

FREE-LANCING

ROBERT BRIDGES

ROME

Excelsior Hotel, Naples. 1.1.25.

Mon cher,

Thank you for your letter of the 21st which reached me yesterday. Letters here seem to take 4 days. I shall be here till the 8th. On the 11th I shall be at the Hotel Negresco, Nice, with Beaver for 2 or 3 days, and I shall be home on the 15th. My boy, if you are exceeding your income you must at once alter your arrangements, as you have only yourself to depend on, now. I have *not* had "The Complete Limerick Book," and shall be delighted to have it. Many thanks for the same. Up to now there has been *no* rain in the daytime—not a drop! This last 3 days I've been doing much sight-seeing—including especially Pompeii and Capri. It is astonishing to me that I never before took the trouble to see these places. Well, as soon as possible you must travel. I insist on it. Take your holidays on the continent. I like Naples. I eat my breakfast in my dressing gown at an open window, with Vesuvius right in front of me. It smokes all the time. I saw a tiny volcano at Pietoli, with boiling lava all complete about 3 feet under my nose. Most uncanny, and thought-provoking about the insecurity of earthly existence. I went down 60 feet under the solid lava at Herculaneum and saw a theatre there for 3,000 people. Of course the lava had had to be bored and tunnelled in order to give access. This also was a bit on the uncanny side. I now wish you industry, economy, organisation, and the joy of life, and I shall be glad to hear of your early promotion.

Your volcanic uncle.

Hotel Excelsior, Naples. 8.1.25.

The weather here broke up a bit about 2 days ago. A high wind. Rain yesterday. Cooler. Snow on Vesuvius—rather fine. This morn is lovely, but with the same wind. The people

who went off to Capri (few) at 9 a.m. will have a bit of a doing. I fancy the steamer is a former English yacht. I notice the anchor chains are of the finest 100 A.1. Lloyds standard, and the thing has the lines of a yacht. I've seen marvellous things since I wrote. Baia—full of classical tradition—scene of Homer's and Virgil's lucubrations etc. Heavenly landscapes. Pathetic ruins of Roman temples and mediæval castles and so on. Ought to be seen about 10 times, and then 10 times more. I shall leave here on Sunday for Pisa for a day or two and I shall reintegrate London on 15th precisely to meet Mr. Doran. Lord Beaverbrook has annoyed me by flying from Nice (whither he had invited me) because of "cold weather." Such was his cable. I cabled a suitable reply.

Your basking uncle.

"Bright Island" is going to be done by Stage Society on Feby 15th and 16th.

Naples.

Well, we have had *one* gale here. ½ a gale. L
But no rain, and very bright moonlight
say "at night"?) Today and yesterda
established again, and is lovely. The
is its relaxingness. Leaves you wi
the weather went to the bad I felt
the marble of museums without a
ce que tu penseras d'Angela Ba
Thomas, he being stage mana
self complacent like all stag
agreeable. The fact is,
in the dolce far niente of
I leave here tomorrow Su
in Rome! This holiday h

75 *Cadogan Square.* 16.1.25.

Thanks for your letter of the 11th also for the complete Limerick book, as to which I have read much but had never before seen it. There are good things therein. I got back last night in a dense fog. Fred had to walk in front of the car with a lamp on a flex. I am now extremely busy getting level with arrears of all sorts. Look here, my boy, you don't want to go out to supper too often.

Your returned uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.1.25.

I have celebrated my return by neuralgia (owing to damp, mugginess etc.). Otherwise I believe myself to be, and am informed that I am, in great form. Mr. Tayler, Tania and I went to the Cave of Harmony show at the Court Theatre last night. Packed. Stifling. On the whole good, but it lasted too long. Some things very fine. Mr. T. took Miss C. home at midnight. I saw the A. P. Herberts in the interval and they informed me that you had got a rich job at Liverpool. I suppose they meant you looked as if you had. Today I have a very heavy day and any conscience-for-work in me I should not be letter to you now. I go out every evening—I don't as sometimes I would just as soon stay in and im- mind by commerce with the greatest minds of the :tc.

I salute you,

Your labouring uncle.

dogan Square. 23..2.25.

dear Sir and Rich,

have been ill all week (? flu). 3 days in bed. Only out of house 3 times in 7 days. No work whatever. But I am now er, and I resume work today. I wish you would give some escriptions of the men in power who say these bright things to

you. Then I could judge better what they are worth—I mean the things. It occurred to me for a moment that to say to a young tyro: "Look out for a job that you can do better and oust the present holder," might be a "common form," a cliché, a regular proceeding. However, I am inclined to think that it is not. What gave me to suspect was that 2 of them should say it. Evidently there is scope for you there, and that in my opinion is the main thing. Also there is what I call staff fluidity. Owing to "Kismet" Knoblock has been invisible for a week, and will be. You are quite wrong about at any rate part of Knoblock's house. The dining room is awfully clever, but inexcusable. It is a fake and an ugly fake. The upper floors are much better. In fact very good. But would you care to live in a museum? That is what I ask myself about all Knoblock's houses and flats that I have seen. They are wonderful, often beautiful, always complete to the door-furniture; but are they homes? Still, I admit he is rather marvellous. My work is gravely in arrear, and I am earning nothing, and very poor. When shall I owe you money? I went to the 1st night of "Hamlet," which was one of the greatest stage-functions for years past. I liked the show much, in the main. We were all there. The Asquiths and I had the chief show in the newspapers next day. In fact in some papers the A's and I were the only people important enough to mention. But I must say I was startled to see the "Evening Standard" calling my hair *white*. Is it? I must now close, the portion of my time allotted to your rising self being exhausted.

Your recuperant uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.3.25.

I went to spend 2 nights with H. Preston at Brighton; I returned this morn. I'd been a bit seedy through a general fluishness, and as everybody else seemed to be having a change I thought I would too. Miss Nerney says I look much better. But of course I have 2 days correspondence to deal with: it is a nuisance. However it is now dealt with, and I am off to the 2nd dress rehearsal of "The Rivals" at Lyric 6 p.m.: another nuisance, but must be done. I did a very great week's work

last week. Item, one good article for "Sunday Pictorial" for 15 Mch. Item, one short story for "Strand Mag." Indeed a heavy week. Collins's (tailor) boy aged 17 came down with Collins with clothes for me on Saturday morning. Said he felt unwell. Died on Sunday. Double pneumonia. Let this be a lesson unto thee. There are few things I fear more than pneumonia. With regard to my play "The Dance Club," all the authorities (private) say I must write it all over again. This is nuisance N. 3 and greatest. I shall write it again.

Your conscientious uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 10.3.25.

I went to "Tunnel Trench" because I had promised the author (who is dramatic critic of "The Observer") to do the criticism of it for him in "The Observer," which I duly did yesterday afternoon. It will be in "The Observer" next Sunday, but you won't see it because you can't afford to buy it. I don't think you suffer much loss by not reading other papers than "The Times." They are all bad, except "The Manchester Guardian." That's the paper I should have in your place. I am getting on with "The Dance Club," being now perfectly recovered from all fluishness. Also I am taking some dancing lessons. I was utterly sick with my rotten dancing. I don't know how I find time for all I do—I suppose by beginning early for I never do a stroke at night, except answering the last post when I come home (if I have been out), and *that* doesn't take me long, believe me! Fred had a fearful liver attack on Friday, so I have urged him to go out more. No reason why he shouldn't except bad organisation. And speaking of that, my "Sunday Pictorial" article will be worth 2d of most people's money, though perhaps not of yours—you being an expert in that line.

Your matutinal uncle.

"The Rivals" is making a terrific start.

75 Cadogan Square. 17.3.25.

How naughty you are in thus upsetting my carefully organised week. If I arrange to answer your letters on Mondays, how the devil can I conveniently answer them on Tuesdays? Still I admit the force of your excuses. For myself I am suffering from nothing but a certain insomnia. I am having more dancing lessons and I find that I terribly needed them. I have, however, only danced once or twice, and floors are very crowded. I will ask Miss Nerney to send you a copy of *The Observer* for last Sunday, or of the article therefrom; but she must not send you my copy. Personally I thought that the *Pictorial* article was very good. The *Observer* article was merely masterly—I am told. But you should buy *Home Chat* for this week (30th anniversary number) and see me on the cover and all among the babies inside. This spectacle is well worth tuppence, even of your money.

Your disorganised-by-nephew uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 6.4.25.

In your private and semi-private reports, I should advise you to be careful of the phraseology. Unless you are a great master of phrase you will always get more weight by a mild phrase than by a strong one; Moderation is a quality much appreciated in this country. In today's "Daily Express" where I have flamboyantly started a controversy in the grand manner about decadent plays, you will find an example to the contrary, but it is exceptional, and moreover the work of an expert—ahem! I have been illish. I was taking some French pills (full of thyroid, pituitary and suprarenal etc.) to the end of reducing my embonpoint. After 15 or 17 days I began to perspire and to puff—more and more. And I could feel my heart twittering around. So I sent for the doctor. He told me to stop the pills instantly, and forbade all dancing and other physical efforts for ten days. I had been positively assured that the pills were perfectly harmless. I don't see that they have reduced me, either. So that the whole thing is a bit of a sell. Moral, don't (at my

age) take strange drugs without consulting a doctor. These pills were earnestly recommended to me by Mrs. Somerset Maugham. She is dining here tonight together with husband, Viola Tree, Max Beerbohm, etc. She will hear from me on the subject! I am still far from normal.

Your infected uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 13.4.25.

As regards the yacht I have let the same to Chartres Biron and Claud Seracold for 8 weeks from June 21st which includes Cowes. I am sick of Cowes, and the weather of recent seasons has softened my ardour for 3 or 4 months continuously at sea. Moreover it is not yet quite clear how the yacht is to get out at all. My cook left to take the captaincy of a small yacht, and it seems utterly impossible to get another one who will do. I have had only one application—from a man nearly 70, and I have turned him down as I am quite sure he would break down in about a fortnight. I told you in my previous letter that I had had a heart attack, owing to a medicinal indiscretion. It is now over, but was rather tedious for 10 days. I have the assurance of the faculty that my heart is excellent. I must now go and have lunch. I had Barrymore to lunch on Wednesday and we had a great time for 3 hours. Next day he was too hoarse to play and they had to close the theatre.

Your convalescent uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 27.4.25.

I thank heaven Leverhulme* hasn't been to the Reform Club for ages. When he does come he sits at a table with others, anybody and never opens his mouth. I admit that he is very deaf. Talking of cutting throats, have I ever told you that I now have a 'Rolls' Razor? There is only one blade and it is guaranteed for 5 years. You hone and strop it (in a patent fool-proof box) as often as you like. I am very pleased with this

*The First Viscount.

razor. I was urged to go to the 1st night of "On with the Dance," Thursday; but wouldn't. I draw the line at revue 1st nights. The seats are 27s. each. The arranged price was 24s. but someone wrote illegibly. The printers read 27s. and nobody discovered the error till lots of the tickets had been sold. So they stuck to the upper price for the rest. This is one of the most characteristically theatrical incidents I've heard for a long time. Another very interesting and side-splitting thing (literary) is that the guest of honour at the dinner given by the English-speaking Union on St. George's-Shakspere's birthday was Alfred Noyes. I am in the greatest form for work. I wrote one short story last week, and I am ½ way through another one today. Nothing seems to stop me. I threw in an odd article for the "Evening Standard" on Saturday morning. My article on Puritans in yesterday's "S. Pictorial" was the leading feature of the busses on Fri. Sat. and Sun—till I was sick of seeing your uncle's name. Three first nights last week: Mon. Tues. and Wed. "Fallen Angels" is really a bit dull, and not ½ so witty as the papers say. Noel Coward rang me up and said: "What do you think of my play?" He wanted to meet me at the Gargoyle at midnight to hear my views. But I refused. He is to come to lunch to be executed. He is a very nice young man—25. I worked most of yesterday—contrary to the most serious resolution never to profane the Sabbath. I shall go to the opera on Wednesday ("Boar's Head") and shan't like it. To night I go to China Town (Limehouse) with the Lords Beaverbrook and Ashfield (head of Tube-bus combine) and General Horwood, chief of the Metrop Police.

Your chink uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 4.5.25.

Last month I wrote 26,500 words, in the right order. I was going on with some miscellaneous work, but it is hung up, and I am now cerebrating upon the novel, not in vain, I think. I had a little party at the Gargoyle on Saturday night. I marked the invitations "Cinderella," so that I got away within a few minutes of 12. Last time I laid my head on the pillar box at 2 a.m., and

I was determined that that should not occur again if I could help it. I'm going down to Oxford to see the Keebles next week-end but one. Then, 1st night at the opera, and the next day (Tuesday 19th) I go to Torquay to fashion operettas with Eden. Phillpotts has 2 p's, 2 l's and 2 t's. I go on board the yacht on June 1 for 3 weeks. So that perhaps my programme is nearly as complex as yours. Tea is now ready.

Your thirsty uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 11.5.25.

Your account of the Leverhulme bereavement is less full than I had hoped for. Still, there are some good touches in it, which might serve for a story. I am now very busy on my novel. In fact I might well begin the actual writing in a day or two. I spent 1½ hours with Beaverbrook on Friday (at lunch) getting political data out of him for the said work. He is about 20 times better than any other person whom I ever got data out of. He has exactly the right imagination for plots etc., and he knows nearly as much as I do about the well known "workings of the human heart." I don't know why he doesn't write novels himself. He says he once tried to write a novel about the life of Christ (on which subject he is immensely interesting); but he found he couldn't do the dialogue. So he looked into the "Old Wives' Tale" to see how dialogue was done, and tried again, but still he couldn't do it. So he gave up the attempt. Rather charmingly naïve, isn't it? I was in the Maughams' house for the 1st time on Saturday, though I have known Willy well for over 20 years. It is simply magnif. There aren't so many rooms as here, but they are far larger. The fellow's study is larger than my drawing room—I think. Also good food. Had a great evening there. I now leave you to your good resolutions.

Your creating uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 18.5.25.

I was at the opening of the Kit Kat Club which is an enormous place. It said in the prospectus that 400 couples could dance in comfort. 900 people were there, but as over ½ the floor space was filled with tables, the dancing was horrible. Packed mass. *We* didn't try. It is *not* a select place. But it is very showy and not absurdly dear like the Embassy. It is all underneath the Capitol Cinema. I go to the first night of the opera tonight. Begins at 7.15. High tea at 6.15! ! Food afterwards, I suppose. Not inviting. Tomorrow I move on to Torquay till Thursday afternoon. In fact I am very *pris*. I did a very great week's work on my new novel last week. The title thereof is "Lord Raingo." Rather good? By Thursday Eden and I will have fixed up the operette libretto. Sinclair Lewis is coming to lunch today. In fact the door bell has just rung, and he has entered.

Your torn uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 25.5.25.

I am now up to the eyelets in my novel, and writing about 1,000 words a day of it: which is enormous. I think of little else and my fountain pen has to be filled up all the time—about every hour. Having safely returned from Oxford on Monday I went off safely to Torquay on Tuesday, and on Wednesday E.P. and I did prodigies of labour upon the comic opera libretto. I ate too much there, and slept too much in the afternoon. Result: neuralgia, which only left me this morning. But I worked all through the neuralgia, as if it was naught. Nothing stops me.

Your living uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.6.25.

The yacht is lost at sea. She left the Colne, together with every other yacht, on Monday morning (after having been held up over 4 days by gales and demi-ditto) at 4 a.m. and has not

been heard of since. So I trust she is keeping the sea till she gets to Southampton. I telephoned to the Harbour Master at Southampton this morning at 9.30 but his office was not open. Anyhow, she isn't there, or Captain Prior would have telephoned by this time. Edward Wolfe and I were to have joined her on Monday! I still hope to join her with Wolfe today. The weather is marvellous—dash it! Russian ballet at the Coliseum last night, "The House Party"; not very good. But John Birmingham's band, which followed it, struck me as the best jazz band I had ever heard. *The* point, however, is that my novel "Lord Raingo" is proceeding at an incredible pace. I wrote 2,500 words of it Monday and Tuesday, and have neuralgia today. Strange! I have just finished my last article for the "S. Pictorial," and they immediately write and ask for more. (Which they will have.)

Your perhaps departing uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Torquay. 9.6.25.

Sorry about your bowsprit. These things will happen, and I am very glad you are yachting. They happen to all yachts. 2 years ago, the entire binnacle of the Britannia carried away and was drowned, and the captain nearly followed it. The King kept his nerve and his place. We are having amazing weather —and much engine. We go to Salcombe tomorrow, and I expect a good East wind then. Up to now we have chiefly motored, through glassy seas. On Sunday on the voyage here from Portland, we made a landfall 2 hours earlier than we expected—and it was the wrong one—Berry Head instead of Hope Nose—5 miles wrong. Compass wrong. As for the error in time it was due to the misjudged rush of the spring west-going tide off Portland Bill and beyond. That tide must have been doing 7 knots. Harbour here full of yachts. This is the best one. The delay in starting the cruise was rather exasperating. I expected a telegram announcing arrival of yacht at Southampton from Monday afternoon to Wednesday afternoon. It came at 5.15 on Wednesday. At 5.45 Edward Wolfe had arrived at the house and we were en route for Waterloo. You most

positively ought to go with friends to see "The Cherry Orchard." It is marvellous. At first it failed, but it is now playing to good money. Play business is going along pretty well. I think it is now certain that Reinhardt will produce "The Great Adventure" in Germany and Austria.

I remain,
Your faithful uncle.

Yacht Marie Marguerite, Salcombe. *Postcard.* 18.6.25.

Here, hero, this is Thursday and no letter from you. We are at Salcombe and go to Dartmouth today. London on Saturday. Perfect weather for 16 days, except for absence of wind.

A. B.

Salzburg, Austria. 16.7.25.

I don't see why it should take 3 days for a letter to reach here from London; but it does. The Orient Express only takes 28 hours from London to Salzburg. I was writing this in my room when the maids came in to do the room, so I took a chair out on to the balcony, with river at my feet and domes, towers, hills, castles, and Alps in front of me. The scenery is rather 2 picturesque. Climate uncertain; also a bit enervating; restaurants all excellent; plenty of amusements and excursions. Acquaintances all right. I really ought to go and see Reinhardt, who lives in a huge house about 3 miles off, but I haven't faced it. I am more inclined to ask him to come here. I think he will probably do "The Great Adventure" in German in Vienna and Berlin. I am working quite well. For 2 days it has been infernally hot. It is so here on this balcony now. With regard to your remarks. Of course evenings, in solitary digs in provinces are bound to be trying sometimes. And unless you are working at nights, or really interested in a book, I think that anything is better than solitude. Personally I always absolutely refuse to spend an evening alone. But then it is easier for me than for you to get company. I think you had a goodish week in London,

but I also think that you spent 2 much money, though I don't know how much you did spend. I hold that 2 nights, on your own, at such places as The Café de Paris and The Midnight Follies is too much. You can't afford it, and it is not worth the money. I think you ought to have restrained yourself—and others. To me these places are very tedious, and I daresay they are to you also. I think you *could* write, and I have thought so for a long time. You have a good natural style. When I showed your description of the Leverhulme death day to A. G. Gardiner and others at the Reform Club, A. G. G. said: "There is a mind behind that." He had no idea that you were my nephew. But I do not see that you are in the least qualified to review a book. I know the proprietor of the "Liverpool Express" (?) very well, Sir Fred Radcliffe. But he is never there. I daresay I could get a letter out of him to whoever is there. I also know Johnnie Macleay, editor of The Post. I think you might go to him and say who you are; it would be ample introduction. You will not, however, get a *weekly* job out of any paper—I imagine. All these articles in prominent papers are very badly paid. I think they would only take descriptive articles. Certainly not theatre criticism. The people on the staff are too keen for that. Can't read this through—full of mistakes I expect.

Your sun heated uncle.

Salzburg, Austria. 24.7.25.

It is quite true that I am here for plays, or play, and I have now arranged definitely for production of "The Great Adv." in Berlin and Vienna. I was not aware that I was here for health. In 16 days I have written about 15 or 16,000 words good and bad, including 10,000 of my new novel. As a fact, I have had a *lot* of neuralgia. Intense heat here, followed by a great thunderstorm yesterday afternoon and evening. Cooler and more beautiful today, and the river swollen up with pride. I'm just off motoring to a mountain lake (St. Wolfgang) to meet friends. I *may* bathe. I was at the same villa on Sunday and did beautifully bathe (water 19°cent!), but I fancy it induced neuralgia. The mistress of the house is a leading Viennese hostess. And

Polgar is staying there, with whom I am charmed. You perhaps haven't heard of Polgar, mais ça ne fait rien. Il est épatant. Saw Shaw's "Pygmalion" last eve in German. Not very good. But the only time I ever saw the theatre here crowded, and I have been a lot. Shaw is the idol of the Teutons.

Your motoring-mountainous uncle.

Salzburg, Austria. 31.7.25.

This district is distinguished by its thunderstorms and in thundery weather *all* physical exercise is a mistake—for me. On Wednesday morn I went out in the heat to collect ideas, and collected them. When I got back I felt strangely exhausted. Neuralgia incepted itself; but I worked in the afternoon. Neuralgia worse; I went to a noisy rehearsal of Reinhardt's "The Miracle" at eve, and then to a noisy restaurant with Kommer, etc. By bedtime my neuralgia was raging. It lasted all day yesterday and stopped all work, and though it is now gone the sequelæ of it are today stopping work. All this is the result of one short walk. I now realise the value of lying low. The novel is proceeding very slowly. It has good spurts, and then the gearbox gets choked (—but I don't push it.) I propose to reintegrate London on August 12th and to rejoin the yacht about August 16th. The Keebles will come to the yacht with me. I have smoked my last Virginian cigarette and there are *none* to be had here. Calamity, but it enables me to unshackle the chains of habit, though that is a detestable, hateful nuisance; and I smoke halves of cigars instead of cigarettes. Also I am sick of going to the municipal theatre here. They do a new thing nearly every night, but all very badly. I've seen Shaw, Sardou, Schiller, Lehar and I don't know who else. I shall write an article about the working of this theatre; it is 25 seconds away from the hotel. Salzburg is getting fuller and fuller, and there is much American accent.

Your gear-choked uncle.

I leave here on Tuesday next by the Orient Express, at about 6, and am due to reach Victoria about 7 p.m. on Wednesday. 26 hours on clocks, but rather more in time, owing to adjustments to fit the sun and to British Summer Time. The journey will be excellent up to Calais, and probably hades from Calais to Londres. I have had lots of neuralgia (still climatic in origin) but it is over—at any rate for the present, and I am working wellishly. Bar accidents I shall have averaged 1,000 words a day during my stay here, despite pains and excursions. I must say that I like Austria and the Austrians, though both are slack and relaxing. Anyhow the Austrians are a most charming, cheerful and sympathetic people. I've met Reinhardt at a rehearsal, and also been to his castle for lunch. He is a little man—and I had imagined a tall one—an out-and-out Jew, not well dressed; but in about a minute you see that he has very great authority, calmness, and charm. I should say that his reputation for greatness is well justified. We got on well, though he speaks less English than I speak German. He goes to bed at 3.30 or 4, and arises at 10 if he is working (if not working, 12.30). He evidently has no idea of time. He is now rehearsing 2 plays at once. "The Miracle" and Hoffmansthal's "The Great World Theatre." I was asked for lunch at 2 p.m., but was warned I needn't arrive till 2.30. I arrived at 2.25—the first! *He* came at 2.35; then he took Rosamond Pinchol (who is playing the Nun in "The Miracle") for a walk in the gardens. Lunch began at 2.50 or 2.55. Need I say that I have had a good lunch before leaving the hotel? At the castle I made everyone believe that on dietetic principle I never ate meals. At St. Wolfgang yesterday I met Franz Molnar, the chief Hungarian playwright, a grey-haired gent of about my age. It was all very agreeable and interesting. St. Wolfgang is about 90 minutes in a Mercedes from here. Molnar was desirous of taking me there in his 'big' car, but I refused. I had the Mercedes and I went and came back in it; but I brought 2 of his party back with me. Today I am working all day.

Your fictional uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 12.8.25.

I arrived last night at 8.30, somewhat enfeebled. I must tell you that the new Dover Calais steamer "Isle of Thanet" is really rather marvellous. Below she is designed on a new plan, giving lots of room perfectly sheltered. And there are lots of cabins. Only she is rather slower than the old boats—I know not why. The train came in at Salzburg from Constantinople punctual to the minute; but afterwards lost ½ hour while I was asleep, somehow. I don't know how far it is from Paris to Calais, but it must be about 200 miles. 3 hours 12 minutes. I go to Southampton on Sunday to join the Marie Marguerite. Your story of the yacht that lost rudder and man is somewhat remarkable and ought to be perpetuated in deathless prose. I am odiously busy today and am scamping all my letters.

Your inimitable uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 1.9.25.

Thanks for 3 letters. 23: 24 and 31 August. I failed to get them till today because of having no address. The yacht has been to Newhaven, Ostende, Flushing, Middelburg, Veere, Zierichsee, Dordrecht, Rotterdam and Vlake, where I left it yesterday because I had to come to London. I hope it may reach England tonight. It was great sailing on the canals and inland seas of Holland again. I came back yesterday from Flushing. The Flushing-Folkestone steamers are great boats.

Your returned uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 22.9.25.

Ought you not to belong to the Sandon Club, Liverpool? I don't think the University Club would be much use in the evenings. Besides, there are no women there. You "must have women—they unbend the mind." Of course also you have to "stick it." I felt very much like you feel now when I first

came to London. Only I'd no social relations whatever, and couldn't get any for a long time—except one clerk in the office, a fellow named Eland who had a passion for bibliography, which meant a great deal to me. I much doubt the chances of "And that's the truth." The play suffers from lack of variety in the plot; also from bad production. The receipts so far are not good. But the 1st night was all right. I see that I was wearing "a huge buttonhole" and smoking "an enormous cigar." I was smoking a small cigar and wore no buttonhole of any sort. Last night I went with the Eadies to the 1st night of "Taffy" at the Royalty. It was dreadful. My boredom was mountainous. However, I had a good lark at the dinner at their house before the play.

Your resourceful uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 28.9.25.

I doubt if you ought to grumble at "St. Joan." It isn't a great play but it is something worth seeing twice. And of course if "No No Nanette" was done by the London cast *it* would be worth seeing. I enjoyed about 40 per cent. of it: which is quite a good percentage. I saw "The Gold Rush" on Saturday night and my only comment is that I shouldn't mind seeing it again tonight. Ch. Ch. is a first rate artist—not only in himself but as a producer. Everybody was good in this film, and *he* has *made* them all good. Crowded houses. I went with Thomas Bodkin. Pat Hastings and Leslie Faber were near, and a third man who bowed and smiled and then came up to me. I was just going to apologise for not recalling his name, when his name occurred to me: Nelson Keys. If I *had* had to apologise for this, he would never have got over it. No, he would have sunk into a decline. I cannot write much today. My day is being cut into. Ranalow insists on seeing me about something—God knows what. Novel proceeding slowly.

Your bewildered uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square* 5.10.25.

The funniest thing about my recent scrap with the Bishops was an offer which I received by post this morning of the managing directorship and head-god-ship of a big new *advertising agency*. No capital required from me, and a high remuneration guaranteed. I think this is one of the seven most side-splitting things in the history of the world. (But I may be wrong.) I was told that the advertising was to be "strictly and thoroughly scientific." Mr. Michael Morton has finished his stage-adaptation of Riceyman Steps. I'm getting on with my interminable novel, and doing articles also, and preparing copy for the third series of "Things qui m'ont intéressé." In short, activity is strenuous. Going to see "Hamlet" in short frocks tomorrow night with Lady Colefax.

Your variegated uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 8.10.25.

My dear Rich,

re Free-lancing.

The most important thing, after the subject and the writing, is the length of the article. You must study the papers to which you intend to send articles. I regard it as essential that the articles should be typewritten. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed, with a request for return in case of rejection, and your name and address should be written on the article.

Yours respectfully,
(Signed) Arnold Bennett.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 27.10.25.

There is nothing in the John Bull exposure except bad manners and one point about me writing in the "Standard" after giving it up in the "Express." I have answered this as it is a simple question of fact, and the answer should appear this

week. The articles which appeared in the E.S. were written long ago in the spring for the International Magazine company. The I.M. company asked me to alter them, but I wouldn't. After the I.M. Co resold the articles to the Standard without saying anything to me, and I knew nothing of the transactions till I saw the articles announced in the "Standard." Such is the kingdom of heaven. I went down to the Keebles for the week-end. We shot with bows and arrows and I rolled a tennis court. They foolishly had a thé dansant, full of people anxious to meet the Me-Lion. In the morning, upon request, we paid a visit to the Poet Laureate, (Robert Bridges). I liked this much. He is over 80, slim as a girl, and as lively as you are. He *looks* a poet laureate, and doesn't talk like a highbrow in the least. He and I got on greatly.

Your paternal uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 2.11.25.

I must admit that I had not fully considered the point that you were trained as a consultant chemical engineer. But the more I hear from you of the psychology of Port Sunlight the less I am inclined to *dis*agree with your notion of leaving the place as soon as you can. So you can keep in mind this view of mine in your meditations, ruminations, and schematisations. Though as long as you remain at P.S. you had better work as if you intended to spend your whole life there. You never know what may turn up within the firm. I have had a great month at my novel: 26,000 words, besides a lot of correcting of MS. and typescript, etc. The first part leaves here for America today. I was to have dined with Knoblock last night (instead of a stage dinner which I would not attend because partly of the bad food and partly of the bad speeches). But instead of that I went to dine with a journalist name Beverley Nichols, who was entertaining Melba. We had a great time with Melba. She is 64 and as lively as you are. She has sold her house in Mansfield Street and we called in to see it all dismantled. It's a lovely house. She left for Paris at 9 a.m. this day. They say she is by far the richest of all the retired operatic stars. A heavy week in front of me this week. I have to get a lot of

stuff from Dr. Griffin for the pneumonia scenes in my novel. Two theatres. Several dinners. Two teas. (Of course my work is a mere incident in this life.) I agree with you as to the *ideas* in H.G. Wells's book. But as a novel I regard it as very inferior. The notice of "Lionel and Clarissa" in the "Express" was absurdly eulogistic. (Still, we are quoting it!) So far, the piece is a very great success. For myself I was not wholly unbored by it.

Your struggling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 10.11.25.

I think that when you get your next rise in salary you might consider the question of owning a small car. Your young, tender life seems to me to be incomplete without some contrivance for moving you about from one part of the earth's surface to another. Not that I have the least intention of giving you a car—even the cheapest! Such an act would be contrary to my principles in dealing with you. But I could lend you some money towards buying a small car if you agreed to pay me back by instalments. I was driven in a small car, called I think "Lynx," on Sunday from Brighton to Amberley and back. It was a polar day, with a wind that tried hard to blow the car over when the speed exceeded 30 m.p.h., abeam the wind. It seemed a goodish car. There were 4 up. I beg to announce to you that all the political part of my novel "Lord Raingo" is now finished. Beaverbrook has vetted it, and is thrilled thereby—most enthusiastic. Says it is the finest thing he has read for years. In 400 pp. he has found only one small slip. I am tremendously uplifted by this verdict, and am forced to the conclusion that a man who can get the atmosphere and effects of the most private meetings of Cabinet ministers etc., with all their chicane etc., and with all the Downing Street stuff, solely from hearsay and occasionally meeting the said Cabinet Ministers, is no ordinary fellow. I trust you agree. When I got B's verdict yesterday, and saw X afterwards I said: "Stand away. You don't know who I am." The fact is I don't know myself.

Your healthy uncle.

Reform Club. 17.11.25.

I am rather surprised you don't get a small yacht of your own. They can be had cheapishly, and if you ran it yourself it couldn't cost as much as Douglas. Golf is no good to you and tennis is only good occasionally, not as a serious distraction. Bridge is a rotten pastime. I am departing on Dec 14th and shall stay at the Hotel de la Ville, Rome. I find that various friends and acquaintances will probably be in Rome also. I have written a Pictorial article this morning, 1,600 words and walked to the Club, 2 miles in ½ an hour arriving at 10 to 1. "Ten to one!" said I, "I shall have time to write to Richard before meeting A. G. Gardiner, Frank Swinnerton, etc. at the lunch table." We were dining at the Fitzgeralds (she is Lady Beaverbrook's sister) last night. I had a cocktail and champagne, but slept well (6½—amazing) and am well this morning. Everybody (who has read it) is *dazzled* by the 1st Part of my novel.

Your fecund uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 25.11.25.

"Good God." I exclaimed at 11.15 p.m. to Knoblock, P. Nichols; etc: "I haven't written to Richard." Everybody remained quite calm. There was perhaps some excuse as I had suddenly to write a very difficult article for the "Daily Express," 1,500 words, and also had to do a lot of other pressing things. Still, I ought to have written at night instead of going with Knoblock to the Russian ballet: which, however, I greatly enjoyed. Sorry. Curious we have had almost no fog in London, while all the rest of you have been hidden away in fog. I keep abreast of Liverpool fogginess by means of the "Manchester Guardian." Armstrong wrote to me about making 'actuality' alterations in "W. the P.W." I told him to do what he liked. The first act was always too long. When I saw it last at Hampstead I began to think the curtain never would come down. I have told Miss Nerney to get and send you "The Writers' and Artists' Year Book," which ought to give you a lot of useful information. You are probably wasting a lot of time and work by not submitting earlier your articles to

Your judicial and judicious uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 30.11.25.

I went to bed at 2 a.m. this morning and at 10.15 was working as usual, after having finished all my business correspondence. I was up till 2 a.m. because Max Beaver gave a grand party at the Savoy to which I went. We dined here, and at 9.30 he rang me up to know why the hell we weren't at the dinner at 9 p.m. He hadn't asked us to dinner. He had muddled it somehow. Not like him. We arrived at 10.45, when dinner was just finishing. It was mainly a theatrical party—Joe Coyne, Heather Thatcher, June, Tallulah Bankhead, Sophie Tucker. Sprinkling of aristos such as the Duchess of Westminster, Castlerosse, Fitzgeralds, Nortons. Like all parties based on the stage, it was mainly dull. A low lot: with about a dozen exceptions. John Coates sang fine to an inattentive and sated audience. Sophie Tucker sang fine and was greatly cheered. I corrected MSSS all yesterday morning, and reposed all afternoon, after several bad nights. Tonight, first night of "The Madras House" and the return of Granville Barker to the scene of former triumphs. It will be terriblement chic. But I am very cross with G.B. for having left the stage. His wife thinks the stage is 'low.' (It is; but that doesn't excuse her.) My article was in the "Express" on Saturday last. It has the merit of exasperating sundry female writers who deserve to be exasperated.

Your departing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 14.12.25.

Just a line as I am leaving to acknowledge your letter of yesterday. I trust you have seen the remarks of the Mayor of Stoke on the libellous quality of my Five Towns novels. They will do you good. The mischief is that London and Manchester papers have got hold of the affair and I have been pestered by their representatives for a reply. I need not say that I have not made a reply.

Your fleeing uncle.

Hotel de Russie, Rome. 20.12.25.

We left London on Monday, and left Paris at 5.10 p.m. on Wednesday, and left Genoa at 12.30 p.m. on Friday and arrived at the Hotel de la Ville at 9.30 p.m. Friday and left the Hotel de la Ville at 2 p.m. yesterday for the above hotel. The H. de la V. wouldn't do. Rooms too small. The Russie is better but probably not so good as regards food. We dined with Lucas last night at the Excelsior, and lunched at a good restaurant today, after visiting St. Peter's. St. Peter's was the first place we made for. Snow all the way to Genoa and frost ditto. Then the "Southern clime" began to assert itself. All trains about 2 hours late. Most of the usual adventures. Rotten night in Paris–Genoa train. But health is good—indeed very good. Not that these base details can interest you.

Your watchful uncle.

Hotel de Russie, Rome. 28.12.25.

I am in full work. Besides seeing museums and "monuments publiques." Very full days. Various dinners. Not been to the opera yet. For ruins and sculpture there is no place to be compared to Rome. It is stuffed with interest everywhere, and couldn't be seen in a year. Therefore how Lucas has written his book on it in 6 weeks I cannot imagine. Never have I had such sensation as I had yesterday when we drove along the Appian Way, with ruins of tombs on either side, and old farms beyond, and ruins of aqueducts further beyond, and the hills and small towns thereon in the distance. It was most marvellous. Weather on the whole good. Breakfast at 8 a.m. by open window, daily. The worst thing in Rome is the incessant hooting of taxis and ringing of tram-bells. You cannot imagine it. I avoid the central streets on that account.

Your striving uncle.

Hotel de Russie, Rome. 31.12.25.

The weather here is lovely. Breakfast every morning at open window. We see a sight, or perhaps 2, every day. Today, I being enfeebled, we drove out across the Campagna, to Frascati and Albano. The Campagna is marvellous. As for architecture, ruined or otherwise, and sculpture, it abounds so much that you simply can't face it. You want to run away. I am working very well, and 4 more weeks ought to see the end of the booklet. I pray God, Virgin, Jesus and Holy Ghost it may end then.

Your toiling uncle.

1926

Rome

Marseilles

The Grand National

The Boat Race

"Vaudeville"

The General Strike

A County Court Summons

Venice

H. G. Wells's "Clissold"

Hotel de Russie, Rome. 16.1.26.

Oh, so you belong to the great worrying class, and haven't slept all one night! It is difficult to be sure whether one has slept or not all night. I never don't sleep all night and I am sure that often I have slept more than in the early morning I thought I had. However, a little worrying is no dangerous thing. I can quite understand your upsetness at the change of managers. Leave! Leave! But get another job first. I don't know what I can immediately do for you. Nothing, I think. Moreover, fixed as I am in the terrific colics of the last stages of a novel, my interest in nephews is sadly slackened, and provided I could finish the book really *well*, I should be ready to see them starve in gutters—provided the final attentions were paid to them in due style. After much splendid weather, the climate broke down. Things known as "Roman rains" began. One morning the eternal city was covered with snow. I was told that snow had not fallen in Rome for six years. Whether true I know not. Today it seems to have cleared up. In spite of work, weather, etc. we still plough through a museum or two, or a church or two, daily. But nearly 4 weeks of toil seem scarcely to have made any impression on the mass. You get sick of admiring. Saith Stendhal—"le dégoût de l'admiration." We didn't see the funeral of the Queen. Imprimis the crowds might have been dangerous. Secondly it took place far too early. Thirdly I hadn't any desire to see it. But I believe it was very effective. According to the papers the entire population was wet with tears, but personally I saw not a sign of grief. The papers here are far more disciplined than they are in London under the lords R. and B. In fact you can't possibly read the other side. I expect to finish my booklet in 10 days.

Your creative uncle.

Hotel de Russie, Rome. 29.1.26.

I finished my novel on Tuesday last at 5.30 p.m. 132,200 mots. Good riddance. I have been chewed string ever since. Quite prostrated today. Just able to waddle out for lunch. Yesterday we went to Tivoli and Hadrian's Villa. What a country house! The Villa is one of the major spectacles I have seen in this region. It has the excellent quality of proving that our millionaires, not even Louis XVI, don't or didn't understand real grandeur of scale. Oh, I was deeply impressed. Also exhausted. Beyond a new short novel, six short stories and 4 articles I now have nothing on earth to do—except cope with neuralgia. I heard Sophie twice—once at the Alhambra with E. V. Lucas,—we thought she was dreadful, and once at a party of Beaverbrook's, where I thought she was certainly an artist,—if possibly a shade too vulgar for my peculiar taste. However, she held Max's guests when John Coates couldn't!

Your uncreative uncle.

Hotel de Russie, Rome. 10.2.26.

I hope to leave here on Sunday next. Address unknown. I've begun a new novel. Sensational and yet sociological. I had the idea for it and I thought I might as well begin it. We are still leading a rather too-social life. Went into a restaurant on Monday and over ½ the eaters in one room were friends. Be careful how you spend money in travelling. Women are great gold drinkers. Your accounts were very good. I think though that your average expenditure on pleasures is high. See to it.

Your exhaustless uncle.

Winter Palace, Mentone. 25.2.26.

If you go to sleep immediately on re-entering your digs, why don't you get up earlier in the morning? For myself I get up here at 6.30. I don't get out of the apartment till about 11.30, so of course I have a reputation for idleness among the staff. But I don't mind this as I'm doing 1,000 words a day. Beaver-

brook came over unexpectedly on Tuesday afternoon, stayed an hour and dashed off again to see his mother at Cannes. He is staying at Nice. He would be. He's going to the Eastern Mediterranean in the (round trip) Mauretania on Saturday from Villefranche. He has taken 5 cabins thereon, but on Tuesday he hadn't decided whom he should ask to go with him! Further, he has bought the 1,000 ton steam yacht "Emerald" (formerly belonging to Arthur Du Cros). He is determined to be a yachtsman. He says he will spend his money, and that if only he can live long enough his boys won't inherit a cent from him. However, each of them will have a newspaper or so. The only people I've seen 'about' are Hall Caine and T. P. O'Connor. No! A short white haired man came up to me on Tuesday morning and fondly shook my hand. I knew his face, but not him. We had quite a talk, but I never recollected who he was. A mention of Leek made me think he came from the Potteries. Anyhow he was a decent bore. We are going to Monte Carlo today to see friends. My day's work is done (11.30 a.m.). I think "Old English" is a pretty poor play. Have you had my booklet?

Your exhaustless uncle.

Avignon. 9.3.26.

My sweet Ritchie,

We had 2 nights in Marseilles. Huge roaring town, with fine food and a terrific local accent. Also a terrific wind when we were there: enough to blow roofs off. It blew all across South Europe. Fine yachts at Marseilles. By the way, in reply to your query, I shan't have the Marie Marguerite out at all this year. No chance to use her. Haven't seen any rain for weeks. We arrived at Avignon at 2.30 today. Heated weather. Meals al fresco, under awnings. Flies: but no mosquitoes yet. Drove round the battlemented town this afternoon, amid dust. We shall see the Palace of the Popes tomorrow. I had a chill yesterday and couldn't work. Made me gloomy. Aspirin at night. Better today, but exhausted. God is love. I can't write any more. Must wend to bed.

Your peripatetic uncle.

I saw a film of the G. National yester afternoon, and I certainly think this particular race ought to be stopped entirely, or modified. I compared it two years ago to a bull fight, for cruelty, and of course got slanged therefor. But it certainly is a very cruel affair. So is the boat race. Will No. 5's heart ever be the same again? I doubt it. No. 5 must have spent quite a cheerful week-end, seeing himself in so many headlines of important papers. The boat race result did not astound me, as I never thought Oxford would stay the course. I was forced to go to a film yesterday afternoon. "The Sea Beast," with John Barrymore. It was one of the worst films I ever did see. It was terrible. It broke me up. Yesterday morning in the Park I met a man who had just finished riding; he was faultlessly clad for the exercise. We saluted each other. It was the head waiter of the restaurant here. Last night we had the honour of the propinquity of the owner of King of Clubs. We were stuck 3 whole days in Calais—Sunday to Wednesday—by the gale. But on Wednesday afternoon we had quite a smooth voyage. Train arrived at Vic before time by 1½ minutes. Claridge's had sent a car for us and Miss Nerney had also ordered a car, and we couldn't get either of them for 25 minutes owing to new traffic regulations at Vic! I am now officially informed that Cochran is shortly to produce Sewell Collins's dramatic version of "The Grand Babylon Hotel." What it will be like I don't know and can't imagine; but it will be appalling. Marie Tempest yesterday said to me: "Good God! When I was just going to have my son I drank a pint of champagne at lunch and another pint at dinner, every day, *and his skin was beautiful.*"

Your returned uncle.

The Boat Race of 1926 was won easily by Cambridge after Oxford's No. 5, H. R. A. Edwards had "cracked" near Hammersmith. His weight was 13 stone 5½ lb, and "The Times" reported: "Since the War the crews have been overloaded with artificial heavyweights, men who have rowed at 13½ stone instead of their proper weight of 12½ stone." It is an interesting

comment on this opinion and on the opinions expressed by many journalists and by A. B. to quote "The Times" report of the 1931 Henley Royal Regatta when H. R. A. Edwards, rowing at 13 stone 3 lb, was in the winning crews of the Grand Challenge Cup, the Stewards Challenge Cup and the Silver Goblets, a feat very rarely equalled. "The Times" said: "For the second year in succession H. R. A. Edwards was the outstanding figure of the Regatta."

The horse "King of Clubs" was owned by Mr. Bellerby and won the Lincoln as a 100-1 chance, and was ridden by Pat Donoghue, Steve's son.

Claridge's Hotel. 5.4.26.

The Cochran Revue at Manchester is taking £3,300 a week. Cochran is trying *not* to buy a dramatic version of "The Grand Babylon Hotel" by Sewell Collins; but he may buy it. At one moment he was mad on it, and wanted to cast and to call rehearsals instantly. Then he began to tremble. They all do. No doubt he will end by producing something.

Your still living uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.4.26.

You can have ———; I heard him and his once at the Kitcat Club. Once was enough. Still, as an acrobatic performance the thing can be amusing for ten minutes—especially the simultaneous pianos. After that it becomes a deathly nuisance. I reckon he is the best advertised man on earth at this present. £1,000 he gets for his 2 shows in each provincial town. I returned to this house at 10.30 last night. It exhibits the most marvellous illustrations of spring cleaning that I ever saw. I am informed that the operation took 6 weeks. I attended the first night of "Riverside Nights," Saturday and was loudly cheered as I entered my box. Never happened to me in any theatre before. I think it must have been due to the publication of the fact that I never made anything out of The Lyric,

Hammersmith. Everybody thought I was making a fortune out of it, instead of being inspired, as I was, by a pure motive to advance the London stage! (Which I have done!) People couldn't believe in the pure motive business. The show is uneven. The best of it is simply marvellous; but there are three poor, dull, flat items, and one of these takes about ½ an hour! A bit thick. Need I say that the trouble arises through Playfair refusing to act on my advice? I told him what would happen if he didn't. It has happened. He cannot learn. Still the show as a whole is very remarkable.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 20.4.26.

I rather fear you haven't been conducting your existence wisely, or looking after any ailments you may have. If everyone said you look ill, of course you *are* ill. If you feel exhausted you are *poisoned* by something. One of your organs is not working properly. At the same time I fully realise the worrying nature of your situation. However, your row has apparently bettered the situation. Can you answer these 3 questions satisfactorily: Have you an appetite? Do you sleep well? Are your intestines functioning properly? Be healthy and you will be happy.

I expect a strike on May 1st. I have indeed been informed by inside persons that a strike is a certainty, and that the men will be beaten. But after the news in the "Express" this morning (alone of the papers I've seen) about the owners giving way about district agreements, I feel *some* slight hope. If the affair is arranged it will be due to concessions from the owners and Baldwin. By the way I don't think there is the slightest fear of civil war, or even 'civil commotions.' But people enjoy making themselves shudder, not only in the provinces but also in London.

Auntie . . . lunched here on Wednesday last. One hears a lot of animadversions on this lady: but I found her all right though she did *not* like this house, and said it wanted "the woman's touch." Good God!

Your masculine thank God uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 26.4.26.

I had a chilled liver for 5 days last week, and didn't resume real work till Friday. On Saturday night, after dinner, I had to go out to a party owing to my regard for the Sitwells. I was horribly tired, and didn't bed myself till 1.10. Yesterday I was all to pieces, and did no work except some business letters. In the afternoon I was so queer that I thought I had influenza. I stoked up the fire and shut the windows, and lay down on the sofa, and an hour of that did me incredible good. Then I had to go to Knoblock's for supper. Slightly raining. No taxis. In 5 minutes it was pelting and continued to pelt. So that I arrived chez Edward with feet and trouser ends sopping. I was provided with socks and slippers and stood in front of an immense fire and was saved. But it was a dangerous experience for a man with a chill and an inclination to flu. I took quinine on returning to my couch. All right today, save for the effects of the quinine. I saw the new Jannings film "Vaudeville" the other afternoon. See it, brother. It is the finest film I ever saw, and marks a step forrard.

Your recovering uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.5.26.

Even now (11 a.m.) I am not absolutely convinced that there will be a stoppage. But I was *sure* there wouldn't be a strike at all, after a period when I was *sure* there *would* be a strike. (I mean 'lock out.') This comes of mixing intimately with big wigs on the very inside of things. I'm glad the "Daily Mail" didn't give in to its employees. Compositors (who are now more discreet) tried this game on Edward Hulton some years ago, when he owned, inter alia, the "Evening Standard." He told them that if they persisted in their attitude he would stop the whole of his newspapers. They capitulated.

Do I think that a fellow 25 y.o. after 8 years etc. etc. is of value only £300 p.a.? No, I do not think so. But that is not the point. The point is the market value in relation to age. I didn't

think that the value of the author of "The Card" and other works at the age of 40 was no more than £1,000 a year. You have to remember the great rule that in the majority of cases a man's rewards lag about ten years behind his achievements. In my own case I am receiving rewards (and not in the way of royalties on old books only, but, far more important in the way of prestige and the general run of prices for new work) for work which I did 20 and 25 years ago. You must bear this in mind. Also that it is absolutely certain that if you can do exceptional work you will end by getting an exceptional price. I've had neuralgic pains all-overishly lately which have prevented me from doing any creative work for the last 3 days. I go to the masseur today.

Your neuralgic uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 11.5.26.

Thanks for yours of Sunday, which reached me this, Tuesday, morning. Not bad. Everything seems to be proceeding fairly well here, but of course the strike has not yet really begun to be broken. And the talk about 'business as usual' is simply silly. Most of "The British Gazette" is simply silly too. And practically all "The British Worker" is simply silly. There is little to choose between the 2 sides as regards their propaganda. I don't think the strike will last long, however. The leaders themselves have no faith in it. This I know. Great efforts are being made by Reading, Archbp of Cantuar, Lord Wimborne, etc. to settle it. But, I am decidedly with Churchill in sticking out for the calling-off of the general strike before anything else is done. I have had to preach this to Osbert Sitwell, Temple, and others. Today for the 1st time No. 11 buses are running along King's Road. Not *one* bus has yet passed along Sloane St. (19, 22, 46). Friday night I received a cable from the "N.Y. Herald Tribune" asking me for a strike article. I wrote it Saturday morning, and I believe it appeared on Sunday morning. The Messmore Kendalls came to dinner on Sunday. The strike drives them back to U.S.A. at once. I

gave him my strike article to read. He said it would have 'a tremendous punch' in 'his country.'

Yours faithfully,
Arnold Bennett,
uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 18.5.26.

The only post-strike news is that I have been *really* laid low with neuralgia, and am today only ¼ convalescent. Can't think. Dazed. Funny feeling all over my scalp. But somewhat better. I've never heard of any buses in the Thames. Fourteen were put out of action in Hammersmith Broadway on one day. One conductor was thrown down the subway steps at Hammersmith Broadway and has since died. A lot of strike news was cabled back from New York and put on the screens throughout the country. The N.Y. papers 'covered' the strike with remarkable thoroughness. I've received a file of the "New York Times" for most of the period. I hear the London staffs of the N.Y. papers nearly died of rush and fatigue. *I* did nothing whatever in the strike except give 100 cigars to a 'flying squad' of Oxford specials who were lodged in the square. No! I also wrote an article for a N.Y. paper, calculated to display the British spirit and the breadth thereof but then I had chronic neuralgia throughout the whole strike and afterwards.

Your stricken uncle.

Amberley, Sussex. 26.5.26.

You are expected here on the 12th proximo. This place is very primitive but food is very good, if plain. It is the bedrooms that laissent à désirer. But perhaps you will mind them less than I do. There is no bathroom, but there is a room with 2 bath tubs in it. Landscape simply lovely. Cars hirable. I came from Arundel station in the 1st Ford car ever made. Nobody knew when it had first entered the village. I *like* being here, despite neuralgia.

Your still neuralgic uncle.

Amberley, Sussex. 30.6.26.

I will give you a sailing dinghy. The last sailing dinghy I had—33 years ago or more—was made specially for me at Gillingham, Kent, and delivered at Chelsea in a barge. It cost £4 15s. inclusive. One day I happened to be at the front door, and a shabby man came up the steps and asked me if I was me. Whereupon he gave me a paper, which was a county court summons for £4 15s. The weather is heavenly. I now have less than 10,000 words of my new novel to do. I have been in terrific form for work, though still insomniac. Mr. Hornibrook's abdominal exercises are undoubtedly working good within me. They take only a very short time per day.

Your work-devouring uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 17.8.26.

I slipped into the Oval yesterday morning, after writing 700 words. Never saw such a crowd. Stayed for an hour. Met two Pottery fellows. Cricket very slow. I suppose you've heard that Dr. Russell went back to Scotland, bought a big house there, and immediately died in it. 65 only. Over-indulgence in food and drink. According to the obituaries in all the London papers, his chief title to fame is that he is the original of Dr. Sterling in "The Old Wives' Tale."

Venice. 9.9.26.

Well, *I* think that Wells's book is pretty good. It isn't like an ordinary novel, but I found nearly all of it very interesting and brilliant. A very hot morning. The weather is marvellous. In the Excelsior restaurant on the Lido, you eat in your swimming costume; in fact, are not supposed to be there in ordinary costume, though in fact some few are. Venice is the finest holiday place I was ever in—bar none. You have town life, with terrific cafés in a superb square (Piazza San Marco), many restaurants, etc. You have architecture, antiquities and

pictures of the finest sort. You have gondoliering on the canals, unique. The port is full of big yachts. And you take a steamer or a launch, and in ten minutes are on the Lido beach, which is splendidly organised for bathing and is infested by the most putrid plutocrats. You don't need much food, and not much sleep: but you can drink all day. We were at the Hotel Commercio; but it is on 2 narrow canals complete with odours, and so yesterday we moved to this hotel, which is dearer, on the Grand Canal, with superb views. A gondola would only cost 16s. a day. They are lovely objects. I must go home on Sunday. We know quantities of people here, and meet far more in the chief café (Florian) than we should meet in any London restaurant. The snag is mosquitoes. But I don't suffer from them. Moreover all beds are of course netted. Mosquitoes prefer blondes. Italians prefer blondes. Did you see J.J.'s Kelvin lecture on the composition of the Electric field? It now appears that there are infinitely smaller units in the atom than the electron. But I may say that I knew this before, and that I always assumed that there must be, seeing that nothing could move about in a perfect vacuum. In fact there can be no end to this business, and the solution will always be precisely as far off as it was consule Aristotelio. Up to now this year I have averaged over 1,000 words a day, Sundays included. As regards "Raingo" the arrangement was that Max should begin serial publication of it in the "Standard" on Sept. 7th, and spend £4,000 in advertising it. But I have not yet heard a word about it having begun, nor have I seen any advertising. The *book* is supposed to be published on Oct 7th. True, I rarely see a newspaper here except the "Gazetta de Venezia" which is the oldest newspaper in Italy—and not a bad paper either. This is about all. I expect to go down to Torquay about today week.

Your frivolous uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 14.9.26.

I got back yesterday at 4 p.m., after a night spent in a first-class carriage with 3 other people—two women and a man. One of the women, by pure chance, I knew; and the man knew

me. His agent in India happened to be H. K. Hales. In fact everybody seemed to know me. I was walking along platforms at Milan when a Wagons-Lits employé whom I had appointed to meet me called out loudly from a distance "Mr. Bennett? Mr. Bennett?" and a man whom I knew not, just in front of me, called out in reply: "Mr. Bennett is behind." I had been in the house 5 minutes when Max began ringing me up. I went with him and Mrs. Norton last night to "Blackbirds" at the Pavilion. It is a marvellous show, and evidently a great success. I have now lost 1 stone 2 lb, and am down to 11½ stone, which is my proper weight according to the tables. The "Raingo" boom is just beginning. Max has spent £5,000 on posters, he says: they start to appear today. It appears that many people think that Raingo and his love affair are taken from Max's own life. This tickles him immensely. I have an appointment with Barry Jackson about the Phillpotts-Bennett-Austin comic opera on Thursday night. I'm supposed to be going to Max's for the week-end and to Torquay on Tuesday. My trunk has not arrived and God knows where it can be. It's insured, but it contains correspondence and my diary (at least 65,000 words), which I should hate to lose. The weather is fine, but it seems very chilly after the heats of Venice.

Your struggling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 20.9.26.

I've just come back from a week-end at Max's. Arnold Dolmetsch and family provided after-dinner music of the highest class. Ll. George and others were there for dinner last night. "The Constant Nymph," as plays go, is goodish. "Blackbirds" is fine, really, especially the 1st part. Noel Coward was with me at Max's. We are becoming great friends. It is remarkable how I consort well with persons young enough to be my grandchildren. He is very little older than you, and doesn't look much older either. I saw a rotten film called "Manon Lescaut" on Friday with Rudolf Kommer (Reinhardt's chief of staff). "The Great Adventure" is being produced with 2 famous and

first-rate comedians next week, but I fear it will be under rehearsed. (Can't spell this morning, because I'm in a hurry to catch train.)

Your flitting-about uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 27.9.26.

I am continually being teased about "Lord Raingo." What could you expect, with 5,000 large posters on the hoardings of London and suburbs? It is all very vulgar; I hope it will have the effect of much increasing the sale of the book. I came back from Torquay on Thursday afternoon with a pain in the a e i o u and sometimes w and y. A chill, caught I know not how. I had to spend Friday in bed. But I was convalescent on Saturday and all right yesterday when we went out to dine at the A. P. Herberts, whose new play will be born on Wednesday night. Old Dr. Farrar came for tea on Saturday. He is nearly 72, and getting a bit long winded. And he stayed 2 hours and talked without the slightest fatigue about himself the whole time. I hope you will have read my review of "A Tale of 2 Cities" in this morning's "Daily Express." It makes joyous reading, thanks.

Your better-sleeping uncle.

Ramsgate. 12 10.26.

This hotel would have been all right had it not been for the coal strike. However I got the proprietor to procure logs. I don't know about your going to Selfridge's. It doesn't seem to me to be a very good idea. I saw him at the Milligan-Moore prize fight last Thursday at the Albert Hall. I went there with Harry Preston, Tom Marlowe (ex editor of the Daily Mail), and others. The big fight was not good, but the light weight affair was classical, and couldn't have been better. Ramsgate is a good place, quiet, with fine air, and a certain fundamental

decency of deportment. We might come here again. We went to Canterbury yesterday. I hadn't been for about 32 years, and I was overwhelmed by the cathedral, which must surely be the finest in England, as it is the oldest. I've practically finished my work on the "titles" for the new German film. "Faust." The film people are delighted with them and with my general editing. It isn't a very good film, though. I was pleased to learn that the German titles had been done by no less a swell than Gerhardt Hauptmann. However, for England, my titles are I believe very much better than his. Amusing job; but for crudity the film people, my clients, take the prize and the gold medal.

Your movable uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 8.11.26.

You shall have Clissold II soon. I am in the middle of Clissold III. We spent the week end at the house of the author who drove us back to town this morning. They have 3 cars there and one in France. Frank has a Gwynn 8 (or 12) in which it is reported he can travel 62 m.p.h. before she turns over. "Yellow Sands" is good on its own plane. I think it will succeed. Some of the jokes are immense. Cedric Hardwicke had a vast success. The play lasted too long, and I hope by this time that it has been cruelly cut. I don't see why Selfridge's new establishments should need you more than his original one: which must be pullulating with young men hungering and thirsting for such jobs. Be calm. Laborare est orare. Etc.

Your uplifting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 15.11.26.

Regarding the illustrations to my Calais article, I only learnt yesterday that the artist had rung up Fred to enquire exactly how I dressed when travelling. Fred told him. A bit thick!

But I didn't reproach Frederick. We were at the Russian ballet opening on Saturday night. The entire world of highbrows, snobs, and artists was there—except Osbert Sitwell, now in America. The Lyceum holds 3,000 people or more and it was packed. Apropos of my article bringing in the G.W.R., in the "New Statesman" a week or two ago, an emissary of the said G.W.R. called here the other evening bearing an invitation to lunch from the Chairman of the Board and the General Manager. I said I would.

Your gloomy-about-the-first night at-the-Lyric-tonight uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 23.11.26.

I am worn down with rehearsals of "Riceyman Steps." Our absence from Torquay has left me with free time, which I could not resist utilising for this play. And a good thing I did utilise it,—for if the play is to be made successful at all, I think I have made it so. But I doubt if it is to be made successful. It is not at all a bad play, however, and there are spots of good acting in it. Last night we went to the first performance, at the Q Theatre, of another play "Salvage," by the same author. It was terrible. It was devastating. And "Riceyman Steps" might have been like it if I had not watched over the aged author at the beginning and also a bit at the end. I spent 9½ hours in the theatre on Saturday, and 7½ yesterday. The weather has been very bad; and it has had the effrontery to deprive me of my daily exercise.

Your weakened uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 30.11.26.

The controversy between Birkenhead and me is quite genuine so far as I am concerned. I shouldn't have gone into it, beyond my first short letter, if the Mail hadn't urged me to do so.

Anyhow I've got a vast amount of free publicity out of it, together with £110 of the Daily Mail's money so far. Beaverbrook is going to publish a note from his own diary in which he relates how Birk asked Beav (before the publication of the book) if he Birk, was Raingo, and how Birk was 'obviously relieved' to hear that he wasn't! I must say I think that Birk has an infernal impudence and on Thursday night, if he turns up, I will tell him so. However, he is a very nice fellow, though vain. I have been very productive of late. Yesterday I wrote two articles and 500 words of my novel, and walked 3 miles in the rain, and went to a concert in the evening. Some day!

Your surviving uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 6.12.26.

We were to have gone down to the Wells's (H. G. being away in France) on Saturday last, but on Friday night Jane telephoned that her mother had broken her arm and she couldn't leave London. So we went down to Brighton instead. Didn't see Harry because on Saturday morning he took a toss off his mustang, and he spent Saturday and Sunday in bed. We saw Frank Schuster (aet. 74) and had lunch with him on Sunday and then he and his friends and Walter Sickert and wife came to us for dinner, and we had a great evening, Sickert being a great wit and ultra-lively companion (aet. 66). Happily they left early. We left Brighton by the 12.5 this day and I have written my Thursday's Evening Standard article since. You don't see the E.S. and you aren't interested in literature, are you, do you? Had it been otherwise you would have loved to see Virginia Woolf and me at tea together on Friday, the day after I had publicly slanged her in the E.S. We got on fine. She undertook to do me in later. We dine at Colefackses tonight. I am disturbed about my new novel, of which I have written about 6,000 words. I don't see ahead. All is well, save a certain chill in my head.

Your beclouded novelist uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 13.12.26.

This year up to now I have written between 350 and 360,000 words. Can't write any more now.

Your scribendus uncle.

1927

"Faust"

"Accident"

Italy and France

Speculation

The Golden Arrow

Mediterranean Scenes

Vienna

"The World Today"

St. Leonards-on-Sea

"Don Juan"

A Court Theatre Season

Berlin

Komisarjevsky

"Flora" at Manchester

"Paul I"

"Mr. Prohack"

Mrs. Patrick Campbell

George Robey

Brighton

The Snowstorm

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.1.27.

We attended the first of "Faust" last night at the Albert Hall, and had quite a party in our box. Photographically it is rather a wonderful film; but I can't say I care very much for it. The press generally is against it, but in favour of my titles. The Sunday Express, after slanging the film, said that my titles were the best ever written for a film. Well, I hope they are! A lot of people came in here after the film and stayed till close on midnight: which didn't do me any good, as I had had 3 bad nights. I went to bed on N.Y's Day at 2.30 a.m., after quite a good N.Y's Eve at the Gargoyle Club. The Club was crowded. But everything was very well done, with lots of presents for the 'guests.' I wrote 378,100 words last year, but am doing less this year. There is much talk of Ernest Benn Ltd. producing a facsimile of the manuscript of "The Old Wives' Tale" at about £25 a copy. I don't know yet what will come of it. I am proceeding slowly with my novel, but proceeding I am. No one will read it, as it is unlike any other novel I have written. I think this is about all for today.

Your wakeful uncle.

The novel which A. B. started at this time was called "Accident."

75 *Cadogan Square.* 17.1.27.

I knew nothing of the Rugger International till it was all over. Even Mr. Tayler, with whom I lunched on Friday, did not mention it! He is not yet cured of his arthritic complaint and he is so unused to pain that he feels the affliction as a personal affront from God. I have done as much of my novel

as I shall do until the beginning of March. The chief character left London at 9 a.m. to take the Rome Express at Folkestone, and he is now, at 7.30 p.m. at Laroche. And this is over one third of the book. I don't know what people will say about it. We propose to leave here at 11. a.m. on Thursday morning. One night in Paris. One night in the train. One night in Innsbruck. The destination is Cortina: but I've forgotten the address.

Your departing uncle.

Cortina, Italy. 26.1.27.

We are here. I ought to have written to you before, but didn't. Well, all sorts of empêchements. Apologies. We travelled from Calais to Paris by the new "Golden Arrow" train, which arrives 35 minutes before the express, and it was fine. But at the Gard du Nord, all hand luggage was cast out on to the dark platform in a heap, and a man went off with a suitcase containing all that is most precious and necessary in daily life. We tracked all the people carrying suitcases as far as the cab rank. No result. Then we came back and frightened the Pullman attendant whose fault it was. He came out with us and he found another suitcase left at the Pullman bureau. It was labelled "Hotel Central." With the Pullman attendant we drove to the Central and actually did find our suitcase. The churchbells rang. Friday night we set sail for Innsbruck, and reached there at 1 p.m. Saturday. Big hotel. Only about 9 or 10 visitors therein. Snow falling all the time! Icy! Very picturesque town. Baroque buildings, and high snow-topped mountains all round. We went to a cinema and a café in the afternoon, and to bed at night. Sunday we had to be up at 5.30. Breakfast at 6. To catch the 7.10 a.m. train for Fortezza en route for Cortina. All right! Heated train. Endless mountain scenery. All snow. We had 20 minutes margin at Fortezza but when we got there we found that the connecting train had been suppressed, and there was no train till 5 p.m. to the *next* change, Dobbiaco, and no train at all thence to Cortina till noon Monday. I telegraphed the Cortina hotel. Then we heard

we could hire a special train from Dobbiaco to Cortina for 300 lire. So we did, by telephone, two Germans and an English naval officer joined us in the transaction. Fortezza is a waste, with a nice little auberge. We spent over 6 hours in walking on snow, and eating and drinking. Towards the end someone had spilt a pool of wine on a chair and I sat on it. At Dobbiaco, 7.30 p.m., the special train was all waiting in the driving snow, wreathed in steam. One engine, one brake van, one passenger coach (heated). We travelled over mountains for 80 minutes in 12 centigrade degrees of frost at an average height of about 4,000 feet, in great style and arrived (a cheap train!), and drove in a sledge to the Savoy, to which I had sent a second telegram. But the second telegram hadn't arrived. The manager, in view of my first telegram, had let one room with bathroom for the night (he was crowded out), and we couldn't have our sitting-room because H.R.H. the Duke of Genoa was coming and had upset everything. So we had one room between us for the night, and no bathroom! A bit thick. All right next day (except no sitting-room). I like Cortina. We see much of the Aldous Huxleys. Weather and climate magnif.

Your arrived uncle.

P.S. Met Gyp Wells on the steamer; going to Grasse to see papa.

Cortina, Italy. 2.2.27.

We are now so well established here that we are planning for our departure. which is scheduled to occur a fortnight to-day, for Milan (2 nights). Thence to Nice (4 nights); thence to Paris (7 nights). So we don't look like being home much before the 3rd proximo. I skated today! 18 years since I had skates on. So you may depend I was not very graceful at first. I don't mind anything so long as I don't fall. I haven't fallen yet. We've had one dollop of snow, in the midst of which I walked 3 miles down a mountain, and the Aldous Huxleys ski-ed rather more than that. They were extremely tired after

it and didn't like it at all. The great ski jumping competition occurs next Sabbath. We have got seats for it, in the next box (or whatever you call it) to the Crown Prince's, who arrives here tomorrow. The royal uncle and cousins left today. Some fuss over them; but there will be far more over the C.P. I've begun to do a bit of work. I had ideas, and I cannot abear constipation. Only, all my work is done before 10 in the morning, and so no programmes are interfered with by the said work. All is going quite well here. The hotel is good. The women's frocks really A.1. Chiefly Italians and Austrians. Scarcely any English. The nightly balls are gay, with a certain decent moderation. Continuous frost. Very much sunshine.

Your skating uncle.

Cortina, Italy. 4.2.27.

The Crown Prince arrived in this hotel yesterday. He makes much more stir in the world than his great-uncle and cousins who left the other day. In place of 2 gendarmes in the village (of hotels) street, there are 40 or 50. About 6 secretaries or clerks,—attendants and boys on the stairs, and a quantity of military train. In fact his occupation of the hotel is military. He seems quite a decent fellow. Tall with a fixed, nice, dignified smile. When we came home last night after a perishing sleigh ride from the Huxleys, where we had dined, we found the hotel packed with people, and the main hall turned into a cloak room. Crowded ball going on, and the C. P. dancing bravely with one girl after another. We went to bed. My neuralgia began in the middle of the night. I think it was chiefly due to the cold. Must have been about 11 or 12 centigrade last night. But a simply marvellous night of stars. Decorations and illuminations everywhere. Church tower very artistically decorated. It is a high tower. Except for neuralgia, insomnia and a few quite minor maladies, we are very well here, and much enjoying it.

Your indomitable uncle.

Cortina, Italy. 10.2.27.

There has been a thaw here today, the first since we came; but the sun has been blazing away just the same, in fact more so. I always thought that thaws were heralded by clouds. A lot of ski-ing was done yesterday, down the Tre Croci mountain. The scenery is truly marvellous. *I* went there and back on a sleigh. We lunched at the hotel there. Considering there is no railway to it, and no road better than a sleigh track, the entertainment they provide there is nearly as wonderful as the scenery. The hotel is 6,000 feet a.s.l. You don't have to use your heart too violently at these altitudes. We shall leave here on Wednesday next, so don't write here any more. If you *do*, before this reaches you write again, as I have no faith whatever in the 'forwarding' organisation of hotels. Well, on Sunday we saw the International Ski-Jumping contest. This really *is* a thrill: one of the few physical thrills I have had in many years. They jump down a 45° slope, and I suppose at their highest are 20 ft off the ground. Best distance on Sunday 178 feet. Of course they are travelling at about 35 or 40 miles an hour and come down with some whack and flop, but they generally sail on upright for about ½ a mile, though sometimes they stumble or drop wrong and roll over and over and round and round for about 100 yards. No deaths. All well here. Doing a bit o' work.

Your thrilled uncle.

Nice. 20.2.27.

We left Cortina on Wednesday morning at 8.15, and reached Milan at 8 p.m. We were in a state of great exhaustion. Bad night, of course. Yet next day we saw all Milan all day—2 churches, 1 cathedral, 2 museums, besides the town and the chic premier restaurant. We might have gone to the opera, but some singer fell ill, and it was suddenly closed for that night! God reigned! Friday morning we left at 9 by the International Pullman and reached Nice at 5 p.m. Carriage heated to 105 in the shade all day. We had acquired 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, at great expense, at this hotel, because they said they had nothing else. But we found that what we were given

was one bathroom, one bedroom, and one immense drawing room with a bed in it, and no other bedroom furniture in it at all. I explained that any room I had to sleep in must have wardrobe, washstand, dressing-table, bed lamp, night table, jerry, etc. etc. Little by little we got most of this. Little by little I rose higher in the hierarchy of the hotel management, until at last I saw a man to whom I said: "Vous êtes le directeur, monsieur?" "Oui monsieur." "Heureux de faire votre connaissance. Voulez-vous avoir l'obligeance de monter avec moi?" He montaied avec moi, and we became at once very friendly. Yesterday we got 2 other rooms, higher up, quieter, with bathroom easier for me to get at, and at ½ the price. Nice is notoriously a den of thieves. It is packed now—height of season. Today was the 2nd great Carnival procession. Immense affair, run by the city as an advertisement, of course. Scores of bands, hundreds of houses, thousands of actors in costume. So we went over to Monte Carlo for the day, and drove home over the mountains. We dined last night at the Negresco, supposed to be *the* hotel. We shall see H. G. Wells on Tuesday. Going to Cannes tomorrow. Paris Wednesday.

Your approaching uncle.

Hotel Bristol, Paris. 28.2.27.

We arrived here on Thursday evening after a very comfortable night journey in the Blue Train, in which I slept over 5 hours—thanks to a slight sedative and a waxen composition in my ears. Since then I have had very little sleep. I can't sleep at night because we go to bed late, owing to theatres and parties; I can't sleep in the morning because I never do; and I can't sleep in the afternoon because I am inveigled out to do shopping. So there you are. I wrote an article this morning on Russian fiction, and tomorrow morning urgent I must write 500 words on Beethoven for "The Radio Times." I know nothing about Beethoven; but the R.T. and its organisation seems to be making a *great* fuss about Beethoven this centenary year. I refused this request for an article. They re-requested. I lightly told Miss Nerney to put them off by saying that I would write them 500 words for £50, and to my surprise they

demanded the same. Shaw is the other star contributor. What is the R. Times? I've never seen it—only extracts from it (which I have criticised in the Sunday Pictorial). I expect to be able to get away from this city (with difficulty) on Sunday next. It is high time I went home and returned to reason. We have seen Gide, Allegret, the Maurois, Guy de Pourtalès, and Jouvet, the director of the Comédie des Champs Elysées. But 3 authors whom I much desired to see again are so far introuvable. Weather capricious and too warm. Health goodish.

Your parisianisé oncle.

Hotel Bristol, Paris. 4.3.27.

It really pains me to learn that you are going in for speculation. To think that I have had some hand in your upbringing now for quite a number of years, and you arrive at trying to make money by methods of which you understand nothing! This enterprise is worse than dangerous—it is silly, and the sooner you abandon it the better. So that is that. We are now going home the day after tomorrow, and it is not too soon. Terrific life in Paris. resulting of course in neuralgia for me. Nothing kills me sooner than staying up late. Tonight, I find, I have to go to a night haunt, and I am beginning the day in a state of exhaustion! In a very short space of time we have accomplished an amazing number of lunches, dinners and theatres. There is, so far as I can discover, not a single good, or even fair, play to be seen in Paris. We have seen one interesting play but it is Russian! The other plays we have seen amounted merely to wasted evenings—hours when I might have been asleep. All I say is: don't go and do anything foolish. A man who, short of money, will encourage his innocent mother to speculate, will be capable of the worst follies. The weather has not been at all good and doesn't look like improving. Taxis are the cheapest thing in Paris, and this fact helps me to tolerate the weather. You can go quite a distance for 1 fr. 25 c. (2½d) and across the world for 5 frs. Personally I never give less than 5 frs. The pen falls from my trembling morning hand (9.30).

Your palsied uncle.

We got home only a few minutes late on Sunday night. We declared very honestly certain silks in the hand luggage at Dover, and the man said we needn't pay anything! This Paris–London journey is very cut and dried now. But even on the Golden Arrow train trouble may happen. I had thought that no one had to do anything in the G.A. train. Passports are examined *in* the train. Ours were glanced at. When we rushed from train to boat to get good places on the boat the fellows at the gangway wouldn't let us on because we hadn't got embarking tickets. The passport person had forgotten to give us these, and I didn't know they were necessary for the exalted G.A. passengers! Had to get someone to get them from the 'Côntrôle' in Calais station. Roughish passage, but these new boats are very good. I didn't see a single person indispoged in a full boat. I spent most of yesterday in clearing up my affairs: which job I completed. I found a new tailor: and went to Sulka's to get all my shirts altered in the neck, and to my bootmaker to try on. Also, we went to the Colefax's for lunch, and there I met Tallulah again. I sat next to her and implored her not to smoke during meals (Gold Flake). Edgar Selwyn and new wife came to dinner, and we went to "The Beaux's Stratagem." 2nd act very fine. Others not so. Great success. Max Reinhardt was there and he came to see us. He has learnt quite a lot of English since we saw him at Salzburg. I must say I think little of your defence of speculation. By all means take the money off deposit but don't speculate with it. Put it into something certain. No industrial security can be considered safe. However, it isn't my money.

Your benedictory uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 15.3.27.

Otto Kahn has asked me to go for a cruise in the big "Flying Cloud" yacht, which he has hired from the Duke of Westminster. One month, beginning about Apl. 20. Greek Islands, Athens, and back to Venice. The cruise begins at Syracuse

(Sicily). Got to get there first! I had not seen Otto for some years: in fact till someone reminded me, I swore I had never met him. But I had, twice, once in London and once at Deauville. So I asked him to dinner on Friday night, so that I could survey him a bit. He came. He is a bit millionairish (20), but very intelligent and widely informed, and interested in the arts. He passed the exam. I am going, therefore. I think I'm going to write a 'big' (as they say) novel about hotels—serious, this time. I made a preliminary survey yesterday at a private lunch with Richmond Temple at the Savoy. It is an A.1. subject—the subject is better than any book about it could be. We lunched at Beaverbrook's on Saturday, and inspected the plans of his new yacht, and listened to his satisfaction at my articles in the "E.S." We are out every night this week till Saturday. Theatres last night, tonight and Wednesday. Omar Khayyám Club dinner on Thursday, and a dinner at Ethel Sands on Friday. The plans for a facsimile edition of my MS. of "The Old Wives' Tale," 500 copies at 5 guineas each, are now settled. Plenty more news, but no room for it. I'm really very busy. Found a new tailor at last.

Your sartorial uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 21.3.27.

Under advice we are buying a 2nd-hand car. We have now settled on a Rolls Royce. It is 1921, but went through R R works for reconditioning only 2 months ago, and is now in perfect order. Except the all-weather top, which has to be thoroughly reconditioned, and this is part of the bargain. Total price £650. We should have had a Fiat cabriolet. It suited us in every way, but there was not enough room for a 6-foot driver such as Atkinson (whom we are pinching from Smiths') is. You dissuaded me from Sunbeams, but the whole body of expert opinion and of users here is dead against you. I should have got one, but there wasn't one with either an all-weather or a cabriolet body. Or rather there *was* one, but I arrived at the garage just after the thing had been sold to someone who

could run quicker. The *Marie Marguerite* will almost certainly *not* be fitted out this year. In fact I shall sell her. Otto Kahn is not 20, but 56 or 57, with snow-white hair. Very busy!

Your everything else uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 11.4.27.

I sail from Victoria on Good Friday at 9 a.m. and am supposed to reach Rome at 8 p.m. on Saturday, and Syracuse (Sicily) Monday evening. The sailing of the yacht "Flying Cloud" from Syracuse has been altered to Friday 22nd (why, I don't know). Kahn and Ko will be dancing about Sicily and I shall probably meet them at Taormina, to pass the time. I have not been sleeping well owing to late and exciting evenings; but my health is such that I have been able to do an immense amount of work. I have 2 or 3 articles to do by Thursday, but that is all. I've written 2 short stories in the last 10 days. I've been studying Einstein's R———y. I've read Bertrand Russell, and J. W. N. Sullivan, and Montmorency thereon. It is very interesting, and nearly as incomprehensible as it is interesting. I'm going to write about it in the E.S. I may say that I disagree with Einstein's theory of curved space. There cannot, to my simple mind, be curved space. I also disagree with him when he says that there is no such thing as universal cosmic time. However——! No mistake, he has a *mighty* brain. So have his disciples. The Maugham party was a great success. As soon as she saw me Marie Tempest kissed me on both cheeks, and Tallulah Bankhead wanted to emulate her, but I calmed her. Only Maugham and wife were a bit gloomy. *He* always is. I hear the play is rotten. Crowds and crowds at the party.

Your eastering uncle.

Taormina, Sicily. *Easter Monday,* 18.4.27.

Heaven knows when I shall get your letter! It will have to go to Athens first. 3½ days travel to this marvellous place. The trains were absolutely on time up to the embarking place

for Sicily. The whole train de luxe is embarked, on 3 side-by-side lines on the ferry steamer. Only ½ hour to cross. I have been perfectly well the whole time, and have slept well, although 2 of the nights were in the train. I am so well that there surely must be something wrong. Taormina is worthy of its immense reputation as a beauty-spot. The townlet is 700 feet above the sea and the railway line, and so perpendicularly above that the road is 3 or 4 miles long. But the weather is bad. What was my disgust on waking up at 5.45 this morning about 100 or 150 miles south of Naples to see rain on the windows of the sleeping car, and trees blown about by the wind, and a thoroughly English sky, and feel an English chill! Why travel 3 days and 2 nights for this? I had 21 hours in Rome, and saw much and slept much in that time. Otto Kahn and Co. arrive tomorrow from Catania. They are seeing Sicily in a procession of cars. He has taken 8 bedrooms and a sitting room here. I found a room with private bathroom awaiting me. I have been by myself for 3 days, and reflected much.

Your orientating uncle.

"Flying Cloud." 26.4.27.

I got your news just as the yacht was putting to sea again at 6.45 p.m. today. It is now 7.30 p.m. I wirelessed you at once. It is highly convenient to have wireless on board. The wireless address is "Flying Cloud C.M.T.Q. Rugby Radio." We shall be at the Isle of Melos tomorrow morning. It is all too marvellous. I am to write a series of articles for the Express on the cruise; but these won't include ½ of what I shall do in the way of impressions.

Your flying uncle.

Athens. 3.5.27.

We landed here from the yacht yesterday morning, having arrived in the harbour on Sunday afternoon. The heat is intense. So are the works of art. We have been up to the

Acropolis and seen the Parthenon. Well, you just have to see it, faintly-reddish marble against the deepest blue sky, cascades of sunshine and a landscape-seascape all round. Everything is being done in the very grandest manner, utterly regardless still. There is now a chance of us going to Constantinople. The best car I've been in for ages is the Lincoln. We've had one in Greece several times. The springing and the power are marvellous. I'm told it's very dear, and Henry Ford's idea of what a swell car ought to be. My last letter to you was held up about 6 days because we were cruising among islands whence the post went about once a week or once a fortnight. Crete, Melos, Delos, Santorin, etc.

Your eastern uncle.

Constantinople. 11.5.27.

We left the yacht on Saturday last in order to get to Constantinople in 24 hours by a (relatively) fast steamer. We did. And we return to Athens tomorrow morning. I'm glad we came. It is exhausting but the reward is satisfactory. The one drawback is that Turkish costume has completely vanished. What about Mahommedans praying and prostrating in mosques in cravats and collars and overcoats? What about a muezzin with a bowler hat of which the brim has been cut off so that he can touch the ground with his forehead. The women too are all free and go to afternoon teashops in European dress just like other folks—and are served by exiled Russian waitresses. The night life is very poor. The fuss at the customs and over passports is terrific but all that is done *for* me. I do *nothing*! except eat and allow myself to be removed from place to place. As a city Constantinople could hardly be beaten. The authorities also have humour. They have turned one of the Sultan's palaces into a casino municipal, where the chief doorkeeper as you can tell at once by his voice, is an ex-Sultanic-eunuch. The mosques are all that you have heard of them. The Golden Horn ditto. The Dardanelles ditto. You see Cape Helles and other Australian scenes on one side, but only a few miles away on the other side is Troy itself. In fact the prestige of names

during the last 3 weeks has been overwhelming. We rejoin the yacht on Friday morning. Thank God! The yacht is by far the most luxurious and best run hotel in either Italy, Greece or Turkey, and has the finest chef. We shall then go to Olympia and Delphi, and afterwards Corfu and up the Dalmatic coast to Venice. Whence Mr. Kommer and myself go to Vienna for the solemn celebration of my birthday (60). The fellows in this party are all excellent, and one or 2 are brilliant, and we get on without the slightest friction. The holiday is the gold medallist of all my career as an idler. Not that I am totally idle, having averaged over 1,000 words per day since I left London.

Your nursed uncle.

"*Flying Cloud*" 70 *miles S.E. of Venice.* 21.5.27.

Been messing about among islands, and coast towns where steamers are quicker than trains. So it was scarcely worth while writing. I haven't had a mail for 4 or 5 days. The last letter I received from you I responded to at once. Inter alia, been to Corfu. It is the earthly paradise. Every conceivable vegetable and fruit grows on that island. The only mischief with the scenery is that it is as untrue as a landscape by Turner. Such is heaven. Ragusa also is a marvellous place, with fine food therein. It is 14th–15th century, but quite modern too, and cleaner and tidier than any other town I have seen, even in Holland. We called at Zara last night at 7.30. Kahn's arrival is known everywhere in advance, and of course the yacht makes a most imposing and lovely spectacle, especially at night. The governments of all the countries we visit apparently have hopes of a big American loan from Kahn. He does nothing to kill this illusion, so we are vastly well treated. The exception was Turkey. As soon as we left Zara last evening, after beer in café, lightning began to play in quite the grand manner. Then all heaven and earth became absolutely black. You couldn't see a thing. Then rain. So much so that at 2.30 a.m. the captain courageously dropped anchor and waited for daylight. No sooner had he gone to bed than the sky cleared. However, again with great courage, he stayed in

bed. So that we shall be 4 or 5 hours late on our schedule, which had timed our arrival in state at Venice for 6.30 p.m. The Italian fleet is in Venice. No room left for us, I fear. The cruise ends at Venice. Rudolf Kommer and I will stay there till Tuesday morning and then we shall proceed to Vienna. Can't stop long there because I must be in London on the evening of the 2nd, so that I can have one day with George Doran, who sails on the 4th for New York. It is a great pity I shan't be able to see more of him. This morning I finished the last of the work that I shall do till my return to town. And be it said that no mean quantity of work has been accomplished, in the midst of pleasures. Never have I had such a holiday. A yacht, a big yacht, with perfectly unlimited expenditure, is the only thing. *I*'ve spent nothing except on wireless messages, which add up to over £11 in the month.

Your returning uncle.

Hotel Sacher, Vienna. 27.5.27.

Many thanks for yours of 22 with good wishes enclosed. It reached me yesterday, but I forget how. Vienna is a great place. Full of good restaurants and cafés and shops. No buildings absolutely 1st rate: but the whole very effective. The opera is first-rate. We saw the 'Rosenkavalier' last night. It was immense. Large house, full. The beauty of the opera here is that it begins at 7 sharp and ends at 10.30 sharp. So that it suits me. We have a snack before and a supper afterwards and dance, and can still be home without hurry by midnight. The Sacher Hotel is just across the street from the opera, and ditto from the fashionable supper place. When I asked what were the good restaurants in Vienna, I was told that it would be much easier to tell the bad ones, as there were *no* bad ones. On Tuesday Polgar and Kommer and I were up at 4.50 a.m., left the yacht at 5.40, and travelled all day. It is 7.30 and my breakfast has just been brought in, and taken up all the room on the writing desk. This hotel is very old fashioned and very good. We have 2 rooms and a servant's room (but no servant) and a bathroom (very fine) for 30/- a day.

Your homing uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 3.6.27.

Les mouchoirs sont très bien choisis. Thanksgivings. We celebrated my birthday in Vienna, in rain and chill. I am this day *extremely* depressed, having had news that Jane Wells cannot live more than a year. This has made a very great gloom in what we call London. See you on Wednesday. You will make a great mistake if you go to "Whitebirds." I hear also that "O.D.T.A.A." is very poor; but I don't know. I heard also that the Lyric "Crummles" is the best bright thing in London; but I don't know.

Your returned uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 13.6.27.

I am glad that you were not tempted by my present to go to the Café de Paris. So far so good. But you do not meet my objection to a man with your income going to a place like the Café de Paris. It would take a rare lot of cinema visits to equal in cost one visit to the C. de P. We go to the Russian ballet tonight, to Julian Huxley's to dine tomorrow, and to a Constance Collier play on Wednesday. Last night we were at the Maughams and had a great time. Also too much champagne. Which is inconveniencing me today. Lack of self-control at table is a terrible thing!

Your migrainish uncle.

The next letter is written in a very flowing scrawl and is not comparable for neatness with A.B.'s usual script handwriting.

75 Cadogan Square. 20.6.27.

Cut me finger in closing me penknife. Can't write very easily. Had to go to a chemist's last night after dining at Green Park Hotel, after it had been bleeding for 3 hours. All right today, but it must be dressed again. A wild life just now in this city.

But we've taken a house at Winchelsea from July 22 till end of August. I drove down with Miss Nerney on Thursday and found the house. Folkestone road a marvel. I got back at 7.8 p.m. Tell me, why does an engine backfire when the mixture is weakened? I am too proud to ask Atkinson.

Your wounded uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 28.6.27.

3 hours and a ½ sleep last night. A certain lack of interest in other people's affairs. Novel not going right. You have certainly been having a great time. Still as I have before said, it is all experience for you. Heaven have you in its holy keeping. I'm too tired to do so at the moment. But I shall recover. Many thanks for information about misfire. Doubtless you are right. But when I used the word '*back*fire' to Atkinson he did not blench. But in the evening he was on a motor bike and 'came off' and made a hole in his cheek. Perhaps I was the cause of *that*. Busy life. Too busy. Everything is being done except my novel. I'm going to the prize-fight on Thursday.

Your decrepit uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 4.7.27.

My novel is going along very slowly. I've had a chill for over a week, caught on Saturday but one last in the open car on a damp day. I have refused to enter into the Hall Caine-prize-fight altercation. I have had a lunch with the directors of Heinemann's about a project for me writing a survey of the world every month in one of their magazines. Sleep is rotten.

Your yawning uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.7.27.

I am now getting quite close to the end of my novel. I have been much 'called off' it by other matters. But it is finishing all the same. London is still stiff with season. We seem to be out every night, and in addition there are lunches and things. Mrs. Patrick Campbell is coming for lunch tomorrow. I only

hope she won't stay till 4 p.m. She is a most brilliant but a most exhausting woman. We were at the Russian ballet last night. Packed. Also good. God knows what else we've seen.

Your persistent uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 18.7.27.

In 3 days (D.V.) I shall have finished my novel. I have now arranged, beginning November, to do a monthly survey of world events for "The World Today." I don't think I've arranged for anything else just lately. We've had 3 very late nights this week. The first was a musical party at the Saxton Nobles. We left at 1. Bed. 2. Sleep at 3.15. The second was our party here on Thursday, which some 30 more or less intelligent persons attended; the last of them left at 1.30 a.m. The third was the night after when I went with Mr. Tayler to the Russian ballet. Mr. Tayler goes away to Harrogate on Friday next for a cure. Much more important, Miss Nerney *has* gone away, for 19 days, and I feel rather like a man who has lost a limb. I don't remember her being away before simultaneously with me. I'm very fussy and fastidious about secretaries. Miss Nerney has all sorts of faults, but I *know* her; she always smiles; and she is absolutely trustworthy. But whenever I look into the drawers where she keeps things I am always horrified by the disorder and total lack of principle. The sun is now shining, and has been shining for 1½ hours (10 a.m.). This phenomenon has not happened for God knows how long.

Your basking uncle.

Royal Victoria Hotel, St. Leonards-on-Sea. 2.8.27.

The traffic being so heavy at Winchelsea as to render sleep too difficult I am sleeping in this hotel, which is quite comfortable; the staff is very sympathetic. We drive to Winchelsea in the morning and return here for dinner. Except for the traffic (and once Winchelsea was *dead!*) I like the Winchelsea house. The scenery is lovely; the beach ditto. The Robert

Nicholses and the Anthony Bernards (conductor) are at hand. We bathe; at least *they* do,—I won't bathe in a wind. The meals at Winchelsea are excellent, though plain—which suits me. Yesterday it began to rain at 1 p.m. and rained hard all day till 9.30 when, at St. Leonards I took a walk on the Front and the Beach. The whole world was in the dance halls, cinemas, and skittle alleys. I like St. Leonards and Hastings. Crowds of plain people—interesting to watch. I came for a holiday, but I had to write an article yesterday. Fortunately, it was easy. Don't know how long we shall be here. Depends. Today the weather is about perfect again. I'm reading more than usual We bought a tent. Problem: how to make it stand up in a wind on shingles. Solution: tie the tent ropes round sacks filled with shingle. All this is nothing to you. I hope you will have a changeful holiday.

Your hopeful uncle.

St. Leonards-on-Sea. 8.8.27.

Thanks for thine. It reached here by 2nd post, after we had gone to Cranleigh, Surrey, to lunch with Swinnerton and wife. We had tea there and have just got back, after calling at Battle (of Hastings). It poured with rain this morn when we set forth: then cleared up and is now gorgeous. Lovely ride. Car in excellent health. Komisarjevsky, with wife, have just been here for 2 nights discussing marvels of all kinds: my experience is that all theatrical phenomena are marvels until they happen. But I am well used to that world. We spent most of yesterday at Winch, I ate pastry for lunch. Then down to beach with K———skys.

Your sagacious relative.

St. Leonards-on-Sea. 15.8.27.

Sorry about your combined headaches. Be glad that you have not got neuralgia, as I have had for several days—owing to wind and wet. And I don't think it will go till the present

weather becomes the past weather. You seem to be having rather a variegated holiday. I only saw the Rodney in the "Times" illustrated page. Her speed does not seem to be given. I have not been 'over' an Atlantic liner for about 16 years. The sea is and has been rough here. The beach at Winchelsea is entirely uninhabitable—except by Danes, who are used to flags standing out straight like boards. At Petworth on Wednesday we are lunching with Alfred Mason, Diana Cooper and Duff ditto. I am doing *nothing*; though I have several articles on order, not to mention a preface for George Sturt's posthumous book. But no novels. In the fiction line nothing but short stories for 1 year (D.V.) 'Don Juan' is (the contract saith) to be produced by Shuberts in New York before Mch 1st. 1928. Whether or not it will actually be produced is, in my mind, still a very open question. I am not going over to Winchelsea today, as I need total repose: but I shall go tomorrow. Your mention of Prestatyn reminds me of B.C. times, because we used to go to Rhyl and Prestatyn was so close. It used to be an awful place. I remember we had a house at Rhyl about 1880, at £4 a week, and this was regarded as the nec plus ultra of extravagant luxury. I am now paying—— But why cause pain? Believe me, I am far from well in my head—otherwise fine.

Your neuralgic uncle.

St. Leonards-on-Sea. 22.8.27.

Thanks for yours, which arrived well by second post, just as I was finishing my preface to the posthumous book of George Sturt. For this I have had to look through the correspondence of 28 years! I hope you will have a finer holiday than the one which is approaching its close for us. The weather has been horrible Always ½ a gale to a gale, for 14 days past. Once 24 hours unceasing rain. Rain every day. Impossible to sit on any open beach. I saw the drowned brigadier-general just as the final efforts to resuscitate him were ending. The thing happened close to the hotel, and I had gone out for a walk between 2 spells of writing. We were to have gone over

to Aldwick yesterday to lunch with Diana Cooper and Co; but had a telegram that one of the theatrical bigwigs (of course his name would be Bernstein) would come down to consult with us. So we had to put off Di. He came. A very decent fellow we thought. This was apropos of the coming season at the Court theatre. We engaged in converse for 2 hours, and had tea, and then he left again. I think he manages 30 cinemas. He has too much artistic perception to be wholly English. I have read no less than 2 whole plays for the Court season, after swearing that I wouldn't read 1. I condemned 1 and passed the other. Which somehow reminds me that I haven't been able to wear flannels for a fortnight. I think we leave here 31st. instant or 1st prox. I shan't be entirely sorry, though I find everything very interesting. Lord John Sanger's circus here today and tomorrow. We shall go. Enjoy thy holiday.

Your wind blown uncle.

St. Leonards-on-Sea. 29.8.27.

Today is the first really warm, fine, calm day we have had since we arrived in this paradisiacal county. And on Sunday next we leave it. I have done a fair amount of work, but not gravely much. I am just beginning a special short story for the Sunday Pictorial. I am somewhat annoyed with the Sunday Express about their sensational titles for my articles. Yesterday's was "The Harem Woman." You could see everywhere "The Harem Woman" by A.B. repeated and repeated. The title was ridiculous. Another was "Where Sappho loved." Equally ridiculous. If ever I sell them any more stuff I shall have a clause in the contract that they can't alter my titles without my approval. Wells told me that he had this clause in his contract with them. It isn't a matter big enough for me to bring before Max; but I shall glisser un mot là-dessus to him at the first opportunity, just to give him something to think about. It is a good thing I am not working very hard on my own, because I am so put upon by Komisarjevsky and Co. about their season at the Court. I have to go into every detail with them, approve every letter, contract, etc. And the excite-

ment will grow more and more rumbustious. I imagine that it would be quite as easy for me to run the season myself. Still, facts are facts, and human beings are human beings. Viola (Parsons) Tree has been, and is, very seriously ill. Struck down while staying with Diana Cooper near Bognor. Very serious operation, etc. We heard this morning from Diana. It was her explanation of the fact that she hadn't written when she ought to have written a week ago about a meeting. Some people have little luck. Viola is among these. I think that today we shall be able to go down to the beach again. The beach has been uninhabitable for nearly a fortnight. Also I am at this moment wearing flannels. Alfred Mason is coming over to Winch for lunch tomorrow. There and back he will have to drive 152 miles, in order to consume cold chicken and ham. Nobody can say that he isn't enterprising. I now feel that I could do with a bit of London for a change. But St. Leonards and Winch between them have not been so bad.

Your warm uncle.

While I was on holiday in Devonshire at this time I made my first acquaintance with the new "King" class of Great Western Railway engines. One peculiarity of these engines is that the main axles are hollow throughout. This information seems to have tickled the fancy of A.B.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 5.9.27.

I'm glad you liked your holiday on railway trains and hollow axles. Make no mistake: I can see the interest of these things very well. Myself, I have a passion for trains; as is proved by the fact that I have recently finished a whole novel about them. Except the short closing chapters, the whole action of that book passes on trains de luxe (save for 1 hour on a Channel steamer). We returned from St. Leon yesterday and did the first 50 miles in 90 minutes—not bad considering twas Sunday afternoon, and in these days you really can't overtake, 9 times out of 10, without some delay. Nothing ever passes us (I can

remember only one case—and it was dark) except motor-cycles. These sometimes pass us as though we were in reverse. Although I slept badly and the climate doesn't suit me and never did, I enjoyed the S. coast. We had 2 really fine days, in 5½ weeks, and one or 2 days which were overcast when by all the rules they oughtn't to have been. The Court Theatre season opens (D.V.) on Oct 3. Komisarjevsky, the manager and producer, got knocked off his bicycle in Fontainebleau by an untamed automobile the other day and had to spend a week in a nursing home. He is still very lame. This has delayed matters. They open with a play by Merejowski, and follow with "Mr. Prohack." I am greatly pleased with Komi. I have to correct the proofs of a book; but otherwise my work is well in hand. and except for short stories I ain't going to be creative for a long time. This is about all. A great calmness reigns in this house.

Your returned uncle.

An Bord des Dampfers "Deutschland." 10.9.27.

This ship is on the way from Southampton to Cuxhaven. We were dining with Beaverbrook on Monday and he asked me to go with him to Berlin. I am in the ship. The excursion was just what I needed after the rigours of the 'holiday' at Winchelsea—St. Leonards. In fact I had thought of journeying to Flushing for the voyage, and back. The others of the party are Diana Cooper, Mrs. Edward Montagu, and Lord Castlerosse. So it is all right. We shall be at the Adlon Hotel, Berlin for a few days. Thereafter, I know not nothing. 20,000 ton ship. Therefore not large, comparatively. But large. Fine food. Each of us has a double state-room as big as a parlour, with private bathroom etc. Weather calm and steadily raining. We had to go by tender down to the Solent to meet the ship, and she was ½ an hour late. So we didn't get dinner till 9 p.m. I have nothing to do, and am doing it very conscientiously. This holiday will be short, but it is real. There is anti-rolling apparatus in the vessel. If she begins to roll, water is let in

at the suitable side, to take the place of air, and keeps her thereby steady. The head dining-room steward has explained the device at length, and I have not understood it at length. Anyhow she doesn't roll, though the sea is nearly flat. People eat all day: rich things.

Your exploring uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.9.27.

I got back Saturday 7.30 p.m. The 'New York' reached Boulogne at 11.30 a.m. All of us got off there, and 3 of us drove to Calais to catch the Golden Arrow-connecting steamer: which we just did do. It is a rare and fine way of going to Germany and back—this Atlantic liner business. Six days of Atlantic liner might be boring; but 30 hours of it or so is just right, and most agreeable and reposeful. Fine service, 2 bands, wireless, telephone, and you can eat all day if you want. Also these Hamburg–Amerika new ships don't roll. They have a device, which was fully explained to me, and I understood it not. But it works. Berlin is not so bad, much better than I expected. I went to the opera, a communist play, a version of the "Mikado," the Ufa studios, a big printing magazine establishment, and a night resort devoted to the extolling of homosexuality. This was enough. I don't think Berlin is an amusing place, except theatrically. Much food was consumed, and still more drink. This I regret. But the facts have to be faced. I thought I saw myself in the "Sunday Express" yesterday. Anyhow I've been travelling with Castlerosse, who is a great boy, with far more brains than you might imagine.

Your reformed uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 26.9.27.

We drove down to Easton Glebe yesterday and back. Both boys there with their ladies. Frank is supposed to marry on 7th prox. But I doubt if he will. Mrs. H. G. is decidedly worse. Yesterday she could neither get up nor see anybody at all

except nurses, doctors and H. G. H. G. is extremely cast down. We came home very depressed. On Thursday night I had been to the Savoy with Pauline Smith; also to the theatre with P. S. Strindberg's "The Father." A rotten play, I thought, and I had been led to hope much from it. I will never hope again. There was serious domestic trouble at the Court Theatre on Saturday morning. I was telephoned for, gave all that I had to the poor, went over, and smoothed it all down, and left smiles behind me. What a life! I'm going out with Harriet Cohen tonight, and ending at the Cave of Harmony (new era). Some chance of Mrs. Pat Campbell coming into the Court Theatre! I disfavour it. But there will be a lunch here tomorrow with her and Komisarjevsky present: which lunch I also disfavour. Que veux-tu? I hate the idea of going to Rusholme to see "Flora" performed. Date isn't fixed yet I think. I hear "Prohack" will be the 2nd Court production.

Your divided uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.10.27.

It's rather difficult to say yet what day I shall be able to come to Manch. Personally I wouldn't have minded being out of London this week-end, as I am too much mixed up with the microcosm of the theatre which is the microcosm as it usually develops just before a first night. But on the whole I should say that it is not a bad thing for the microcosm that I haven't left London. Considerable alarums and excursions! I spent most of Friday and ½ Saturday in the theatre, and another keen crisis arrived last night, Sunday, just as I was going out to dinner. I was approached about the theatre at 8.15 this morn, which is part of my time for reflection upon my own work, but the assailant was beaten off with loss. There is not a single person in the microcosm who imaginatively realises that I have anything of my own to do of the slightest importance. Still, it is all very diverting. Hugh Walpole and Mrs. Patrick Campbell are going with me to the dress rehearsal tonight. We saw "Metropolis" at Hastings. It is utterly Desolating. (I saw the

original stone work (?) scenery for it still standing in the Ufa grounds near Berlin. Made you think the thing had really happened.) Weather here, gale-y and evil. But a bright morning today—it won't last. I started a new short story yesterday-morning, and wrote an article yesterday afternoon. So that work *has* recommenced. You think this letter is short. There were 227 words in yours (excluding terms of affection and address). Count the above if you like.

Your calculating uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 10.10.27.

Transcendently busy. Re-writing a whole act of a play, and other things including rehearsals. Also the funeral of Mrs. Wells, which takes place this afternoon at the Golders Green crematorium. I expect that this affair will dash all my afternoon to pieces. "Paul I" will not be allowed to run for long but to me its prospects seem to be pretty good. It has had a fine press, and is undoubtedly a production of which anyone concerned in it has no reason to be anything but proud. Miss Nerney on the other hand did not like the play. Which shocked me and shook me, as I have a great respect for her judgment. "Mr. Prohack" is now having preliminary rehearsals. We have had some fine days, very fine, but today, despite the newspapers, is foggy. I think I shall be in Manchester on the Wednesday night. It seems that the whole of your family is to be present on the same night.

Your rushing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 24.10.27.

I was engaged in highly complimenting the artists, when you had to fly on Wednesday night. Nevertheless despite my flatteries (odiously insincere, but quite convincing), the acting was some of the worst I ever did in all my life see. Its woodenness; its monotony; its total failure to rise at any emotional crisis! Only Clare was goodish. Without her the play would

have been insupportable. I think the play held the audience all right. I was rather exhausted after that excursion. I stopped in bed all Saturday afternoon, and then rose up and went to various places. So I had to work yesterday. Last week I did scarcely any work (of my own). But I resumed yesterday. Crowded week this! Two first nights. 2 dinners, various lunches, short story to write, rehearsals of 'Prohack,' Board meetings of 2 companies. "Paul I" is doing very well indeed, and I am told that the audiences are 'very smart': a fact which gives innocent pleasure to every member of the cast and of the staff of the theatre. Odd? No, perhaps not.

Your dogged uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 15.11.27.

I came downstairs at 10.20, after retiring at 3 a.m. after the first dress rehearsal of "Mr. P." I don't reckon that the rehearsals of "Mr. P." have been very good. "Mr. P." is played by a young actor, Charles Laughton, of great talents but little experience. If he comes off, it will be all right. If he muddles it, it will be disastrously wrong. There are 2 other amateurish persons in the cast. Last night as I listened to, and made critical notes on, the flat, dull performance, I began to wonder whether there is anything in the play at all. I know not. (The scenery is very jolly, especially the 1st act.) The play seems to me to be very conventional and old-fashioned, after Chekhof's. But it is modernness itself compared to the sweetmeats and savouries of Lonsdale, Coward, and Co. Coward was coming to dinner Friday night, but he can't now. Rehearsals of new play. "Home Chat" is a failure. Deservedly. Do you know, that play actually only plays 80 minutes. A bit thick! Still, in the large sense, it is his best play. And good jokes in it. We are going to Brighton for Xmas—3 days. Harry Preston was *horrified* at being obliged to refuse us, because both his hotels are booked up for Xmas. I think we are going to the Bedford, but it won't be managed by a manager who is personally and passionately devoted to *me*.

Your expectant uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 21.11.27.

We don't yet know anything about the run of "Prohack." The popular view is that it will run well. But I am not sure of this yet. It is certainly very well received. At any rate it is bound to run till the end of the year. In fact over the N.Y. I spent all yesterday afternoon in bed, thinking upon my work. The play being now produced I have a great deal to do—especially things left over. We dined last night at Margaret Kennedy's (Mrs. David Davies). Reached there in the most pouring rain. Very agreeable house. David himself is a most amusing man. We heard a story about God and the child who was told the story of the Golden Calf (I forget the same). Child: "Was God angry?" Mother: "Yes. Very angry." Child: "I thought he would be. Anybody else would have laughed." Still, the general level of the conversation was a bit higher than that. George Doran will arrive in a few days. Which will mean that my days will be fuller than ever.

Your anticipatory uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 28.11.27.

As regards private work and study, so long as you honestly feel you are not wasting time, and *are* keeping in touch with things, that is all right (I think). Personally, I have a great belief in a consecutive course of work. Something large and continuous, undertaken, and accomplished according to a schedule of time. If I were you, and had the energy, I should learn German. We are living a heavy life. "Sirocco" has 2 good scenes, but is not good, and Ivor Novello is not equal to the part. I met Coward at lunch Saturday, and I said: "Noel, I will now talk about your play." And I did. He agreed with my views. He is a very nice young man. Last night we went to the Sitwell première at the Theatre Arts Club. Packed. Not a play. An entertainment. Funny in parts, but in more parts tedious. Afterwards we went to a Sitwell supper at Mrs. Gr . . . . Mrs. G. is what is called 'a great hostess'. Anyhow there were five (gigantic) footmen in the halls, and an enor-

mously fat butler. Huge house. It was a good supper, and from a young Guinness girl I learnt a lot about the home life of those who live richly on stout. We left at 1.10. Gertrude Kingston left at the same time. Gertrude, who is an old friend (and who produced the play), asked for a taxi. The butler said there were no taxis about. She then asked him if he could telephone for a taxi. He said he couldn't. So we drove her home. But if he had said that to me, I should have asked him to take my overcoat, and gone back to the drawing room and told Mrs. G. I should stay till a taxi was got for me. As it was, Gertrude and I contented ourselves with loud remarks about the inefficiency of large houses in the West End. Tonight I am dining with the Prince of Wales at the Piccadilly—through the agency and hospitality of an innkeeper, Harry Preston. Comment would spoil it.

Your rejuvenated uncle.

Doran is in town and we are foregathering much.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 5.12.27.

Busy. Thanks for yours. This is the penultimate day for my monthly "World Today" article. Consequently I am very preoccupied. Feuchtwanger was to have come to lunch today and we had asked several bright people to meet him. But he is laid up with a chill. On the whole we are rather relieved. I don't know him and I hear that he speaks very little English. On the other hand I hear that he is a very nice man. We have to go to the memorial service to Lady Beaverbrook today at noon. I drove down to Mickleham for the funeral on Saturday afternoon and the cold was terrible, especially standing bareheaded at the grave-side. Lord Ashfield had only just risen from a sick-bed. I bet he is ill again by this time. There must have been about a couple of hundred pounds worth of flowers on and around the coffin. People were much moved. I brought Castlerosse back with me, and we called on Max, at Max's request, at the Vineyard. He says he will never go to Stornoway House again. There was a small procession of fast cars

of millionaires and one author from Leatherhead to Fulham. I arrived second but Max had five minutes of me. Yesterday we went to the Furtwangler concert at the Albert Hall, which was very fine. In the evening to a grand dinner given by Doran at the Savoy. "Flora" is going to be produced in Germany. God help the Teutons.

Your concentrating uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 13.12.27.

There is a rehearsal of the play this morn, to correct growing errors. The time being so near Xmas, business is greatly falling off, though the reception is as enthusiastic as ever. Also, we do not seem to be able to get another theatre for the right moment. The Haymarket wrote on their own saying they would like to take a transfer, but I doubt very much if it can be arranged. So that the future is extremely obscure. Mrs. P. Campbell is aboundingly and violently anxious to do Flora, and is trying to raise capital for the enterprise. I don't know whether she will succeed; but she is anyhow a terrificly energetic creature. Said she on Sunday afternoon, when I corrected her interruptions: "If you want to keep me quiet, give me a cigar." So I did. But it did not quieten her in the slightest degree. I heard the "Music from the Ether" at the Savoy on Saturday. Very strange. However, Oliver Lodge told me it was not really strange. It was I who poked him in the back and made him get up and speak. He is a very nice fellow. We go to see Ruth Draper this afternoon. Ruth wants me to write a play for her. What next? We are still supposed to be going to Brighton for Xmas. Have I told you about my meeting with the P. of Wales?

Your living uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.12.27.

I suppose that the shops in Birmingham on Xmas Eve are just as interesting as London shops. I certainly say and assert that Lewis's of Manchester will bear comparison for grandiosity with most things in London. There is a great deal of talk here

of the big trade now being done by London shops; but my particular friend Mr. Coward, the same being my barber at Harrod's told me that trade had been and was very slack indeed. Thank God I have sent off all my few Xmas presents and things. At least they have got as far as Miss Nerney and I shan't see them again. Yesterday afternoon we went to "Messiah" by Beecham and Handel at Albert Hall. Such a draught in the arena that I wore my hat throughout the performance except in the Hallelujah Chorus, when everybody for some British reason stood up! Funny! I hadn't heard the "Messiah" for years. The acoustics spoilt the joy. Three trombones reduced 600 voices to simply nothing. Still, it was worth hearing. Last night we went to the English version of the French Lesbian play "La Prisonnière," private performance at the Arts Theatre Club. Not bad. But a mediocre play. We left after the 2nd act; not because we were bored, but because we had said we would and Atkinson was waiting for us outside in the deathly cold. Then we danced for about 1 hour—in the drawing room. And finished up with the last movement of the 9th Symph on the gramoph. Still worried about getting another theatre for "Mr. P." We haven't got it yet. Harry Preston and I were both giving lunches at the Embassy Wednesday last. (We: Cochrans and Clare Eames and Sidney Howard.) George Robey was with Harry. I had quite a talk with Robey afterwards. He is a very gloomy man, with very reactionary ideas on everything. He says he lives absolutely alone and prefers that and is still very miserable. Decent fellow, I should say. Lunching and dining out today. I did *much* work yesterday, and shall write 1 article today, and finish another short story by Thursday. (D.V.)

Your coagulated uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.12.27.

A Xmas potion, dose, dope, or hard water softener. With love. We hope you will uproariously enjoy the festive season. We shall go to Brighton Saturday, Sunday, return Monday.

Your calendared uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 29.12.27.

Well, I was just about to make enquiries, having come to the conclusion that either you or your letter must have got lost in the snow. We had a good wet snowy time at Brighton. The hotel was not bad. Harry Preston gave me a squeaking sham cigar which is my joy. He also refused to present any bill for the lunch given by me at his hotel. So I gave a subscription to his hospital. We got down to Brighton on Friday, mainly in the dark, in 2½ hours. But we got back on Monday evening in 2.3333 hours. When we were going up Reigate Hill a stranded gentleman told us that we could not arrive at the summit unless we had chains and that there were already seven cars at rest on the slope. We had not chains. So we turned back and took the new road from Reigate to Epsom. On Monday night we obtained chains, and on Tuesday morning Atkinson went off again to bring back the rest of the party. The journey took him nearly four hours, and he says that it was reported to him that he was the first car to reach Brighton from London for 24 hours. Which I can well believe. He returned safely in 2½ hours. So everything was all right. Theatrical business is almost at a standstill. We did very excellent business on Monday and Tuesday, but nothing worth talking about last night. The majority of theatres, I hear, were nearly empty. We have not yet got another theatre to transfer to. God knows what will happen.

Your persevering uncle.

1928

THE THAMES FLOOD

A COCHRAN REVUE

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

DUPONT AND "PICCADILLY"

NEWMARKET

THE OPERA "JUDITH"

LE TOUQUET—PARIS PLAGE

"THE RETURN JOURNEY"

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS

GOD

ARMISTICE NIGHT

"MEDITERRANEAN SCENES"

"THE REALIST"

CHRISTMAS

75 Cadogan Square. 3.1.28.

Strange: so far I have not made one mistake in writing the number of the year! If I get through this week without such error it will be a record for me. I merely mention this because I see that your letter (for which thanksgivings) is equally free from scratching-out. We still haven't got another theatre for "Mr. Prohack." What offers we have had will not do for us. It is most trying. I don't let it try *me*; but why people should ever show any practical interest in the stage I really cannot understand. I doubt whether I have yet grasped who lives at No. 207 Waterloo Road, Burslem. When I lived at 205, 207 was occupied by a gent named Spencer Lawton, a great local preacher and a comparatively wealthy man. I expect he is now assisting God in some H.Q. capacity. Possibly helping G. to take stock. Whether or not I am going to the South within the next few weeks I know not. It all depends on theatre. I can't decently leave until something is settled, and even then I don't know that I really care to go away. I've got 2 invitations, but I don't care to accept invitations except for 2 or 3 days. I could go for a voyage. All is obscure, obscure. The snow went in a night, and there was quite a lot of it. All is well here. But nothing is happening.

Your breakfastless uncle.

It was at this time that the Thames suffered from an extraordinarily high tide, which resulted in considerable flooding of houses in many parts of riverside London.

75 Cadogan Square. *Typewritten.* 10.1.28.

The Herberts' dining room and kitchen had water nearly up to the ceiling. They have had to do their cooking on a gas ring in the bedroom. Similarly at Nigel Playfair's. It was at the

house of our friend Naomi Mitcheson (a Haldane) that two maidservants were drowned. And so on. I went down on Sunday morning to see what could be seen, and saw nothing. "Mr. Prohack" is indeed off. We thought we had the Royalty Theatre on Friday afternoon, but owing to the idiosyncrasies of the theatrical world, we had not. We refused the Strand Theatre as being entirely unsuitable. I have been rather worn out by the Court season, as I have had a great deal to do with it, especially as a listener to all and sundry and as an adviser to the entire world. Indeed I have been very worn out. I am now recovering. I believe that I should have gone to Paris today if I were not kept in London by my *World Today* article. I might go next week, but you never know.

Your adagio uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 16.1.28.

Re cup-ties and football, it seems that Fred has had a narrow escape of winning £6,000. He guessed right the result of 20 matches out of 25, and all the remaining 5 were drawn. He was greatly excited. I may say that I am not very keen on him getting hold of £6,000, as he would probably leave us if he did, and I particularly want him not to leave. Bad sleeping of late. I did no work yesterday and I shan't do any today. I went to bed at 2.30 a.m. today with 2 glasses of champagne within me. Celebration of Anthony Prinsep's leaving the Globe Theatre and going with Margaret Bannerman on an Australian tour. His manager asked me to write a foreword for the special programme (the performance was for a charity), and in return Prinsep sent me 2 stalls and an invitation to his supper (which I reckon must have cost him £400). The play was on the whole dull and naughty, but finely acted. The supper was very joyous, simple-minded, naïve, noisy. We meant to leave at 12.30 and left at 1.45. I didn't wake up finally till 9.25 today, and feel quite well, though tired. Today it is all Hardy's funeral. I shall be there. You will probably see a letter from me about the imperfections of the arrangements in tomorrow's "Daily

Express." I nearly sent it to the "Times" but I want more publicity than the "Times" can give. Besides, the "Times" might decline to print the thing. The weather is bad. I'm not doing any large and deathless work; but I may soon. Articles and short stories seem fully to occupy me. Health excellent.

Your funerary uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 23.1.28.

The Abbey affair is now over. I had a bad press in the provinces, but the approval of all the people I know. Some anonymous letters, abusive, brief, and to the point. One was "Arnold Bennett, tripe! Thomas Hardy, gentleman!" The misrepresentation in the press (London correspondents of local papers) was gross. No need to specify instances of it. I have done some good; also last Tuesday the "Express" was sold out, and copies could not be obtained in London. There is another late night tonight; another farewell dinner (Claridge's) to Philip Nichols prior to his departure on Thursday for 2 years to New Zealand. We haven't yet got another theatre. We had the offer of the Prince of Wales's this afternoon, "Regatta" being a complete frost (as it deserved to be), but the rent is absurdly high, and I have absolutely and instantly declined it, just before I began this letter. The drawing room has been all altered today, in accordance with the conception of a room in which one can work, act, write, play the piano, sleep, and receive. I am glad to hear you are getting £5 suits from Austin Reed's. I can tell you this: last week at the French boot shop Raoul's in Shaftesbury Avenue I at last got a pair of shoes that I can wear—35s. Not a crease! And comfortable! How long they'll last I can't say. But ordinarily my footwear costs 5 guineas a pair. So there is a margin. Also I am just about to sue a bootmaker (ready made) for not giving me my money back for 2 pairs I can't wear. Even these cost 3 guineas each. So that I don't call your Austin Reed step a backward step.

Your roystering uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 31.1.28.

We came back from Seaton yesterday having left London on Thursday. Friday was magnificent. Saturday and Sunday were *terrible;* but the sea and the flying spume (which carpeted the front) were a fine sight. Yesterday, glorious. We did the 1st 95 miles in just under 3 hours. The engine has just been overhauled. The fact is, I hadn't quite realised the possibilities of that car. Its chief point (for me) is that it doesn't tire you. Springing I think is equal to the Lanchester. And 40 miles p.h. is a quite ordinary speed for the contraption. It is far cheaper than a Ford at £125. We liked Seaton. We also went to Sidmouth, Salisbury, Winchester and Exeter, and examined and approved 3 cathedrals. I must now try to do a bit of work. In spite of all my assertions to the contrary I see some likelihood of my writing another play. We have *not* got another theatre for "Mr. P." All well.

Your loin-girding uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 7.2.28.

Thanks for letter and atlas of your flat. This flat seems rather all right. Why don't you get 2nd hand carpets, of quality? They are by far the cheapest in the end. And don't get them too large; let them be on the small side. It's a pity there is no gas; unless electric current costs about 10% of what it costs here. The newest gas stoves are very good, and they save much trouble. I reckon that it costs over £150 a year to light, warm, and cook in, this house. We had a small dance here on Friday night. Only, as 8 people couldn't or didn't come, it was a bit too small. 19, I think. However, they liked it much. Cynthia Noble, whom I took to see "Macbeth" in Khaki last night, said that she loved it because all through it was like the end of a large party when all the bores have gone. We are going to Paris for the week-end—Friday morning; and Eliz Lewis and Cynthia Noble are going also. I think that young Alfred Beit is going too. Return Tuesday. Nothing that you saw at Liverpool could have been worse than "Macbeth" in Khaki. I came

out a mass of abraded nerves, and couldn't sleep. Scores of the finest lines in the English language assassinated! Yet it might have been good. I'm going to Manchester Sunday 26th for 3 days with the Cochran-Noel Coward Revue entire company, to see the final rehearsals and the 1st night. I seem to be living at a great rate. Further, I seem to be starting to write a new play. I'm feeble this morn after last night.

Your damaged uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 15.2.28.

I have just returned from Paris (6 p.m.) and found a large number of letters from strangers nearly all asking me to do something for nothing. We had a very good time in Paris, but went to bed too late. One morning I went to bed at 5 o'clock, which, I may tell you, is highly unusual for me. We went to 4 theatres in 5 days, and should have gone to five but I was too exhausted at the end. It rained practically the whole time while we were in Paris, and it was raining when we left this morning. The sea was rough and the voyage ditto, on a small ship, but we came through excellently, and the train was only thirty minutes late at Victoria. I must spend the next 90 minutes in getting straight with my correspondence.

Your prodigal uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 20.2.28.

I don't know about taking you to the 1st night of the review. Charlie is a great friend of mine. But in this excursion I have rather forced myself upon him. He has insisted on giving me one seat, though I wanted to pay for it. If I ask for another. . . . But I will see, and you shall hear. The company, including me, is going up by special train starts or arrives I haven't the shadow of a shade etc. I am now in the midst of writing the greatest play ever written since God's drama of creation. Your cousin John spent 2 hours with me yesterday. He has charm. He is 17 11/12ths. I hear he is idle; but so were you at his

age. And see what an exemplar of energy you have become since—snatching young maidens out of the fortresses of Wolverhampton and so on.

Your theatrical uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 6.3.28.

I enclose cheque with God's and my blessing and good wishes to you both. Miss Nerney has your furniture in hand. All I know about furniture at the present moment—and it fills the whole of my mind—is that I sent my mattress to be recovered the other day and they have made it all anew, with such skill that I cannot sleep on it. I found this out last night at 12.15 when everybody had gone to bed. So you can conceive the broad results. I say no more; but I am slightly enfeebled and pernicketty. I went down to Max's on Sunday and returned on Monday, and had a great time there and a little sleep. He is still very depressed. The house now is badly run. You have to ring yourself for anything you want. I have begun Act II of my play. I shouldn't have gone to Cherkley, only Max nobly lent me a car both ways. He says he has 3 cars and 3 chauffeurs, with nothing for them to do. I had a dinner here last night—males only. Thank God they all left in decent time. As a rule people *won't* go. I am engaged every night for a fortnight to come—with only one theatre in it, and that is by special request for a Sunday night show—first play by a youthful friend, Vedrenne's son. But Chaplin's "Circus" is included in the list of nights. I will duly refuse your wedding invitation. There's one thing about a wedding—it doesn't last long—even with all the ceremonies, 2 or 3 hours. And what is 2 or 3 hours?

Your paternal uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 13.3.28.

I'm going to Charles's film tomorrow night. I hear it's very uneven. Tonight both Low and Hazelden are coming to dinner, eke the Herberts, eke Jeanne de Casalis, eke others. As both Low and Haselden are very quiet and shy persons I don't know

how it will turn out. Nor am I at all sure about a dinner that Arthur Pinero is giving at the Athenæum Club on Friday night. I fear solemnity, though "Pin" is a most delightful old man when you get close to him. I should advise you to sell the L.M.S. stock at once, and buy British American Tobacco shares. They are bound to go up substantially in the course of a few years. I am just furnishing the spare room—from the "Daily Mail" Ideal Home Exhibition! Rather good. I was at the great dinner given to "Quex" of the "Evening News" on Friday. I said to "Quex" on entering: "Do you know where I'm sitting?" He saith: "Yes. You're sitting next to me at the top table." "Why?" "Because I asked for it. I knew I could count on you for moral support in this ordeal." Birkenhead made a most sparkling and impudent speech. On the previous evening I sat at a scrap between him and Churchill and John Seely until nearly 12. I shall finish Act II of my play today or tomorrow.

Your arduous uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 19.3.28.

Yesterday, Sunday, I wrote an article and a half. Knoblock came to lunch and at eventide George Doran and I had a party of 4 at the Savoy, at which we danced, etc. But I told the women plainly that they would have to go home at 11.15, because we should not allow our Monday's work to be interfered with because they were incapable of making up their minds to go home. I got them away at 11.20—not so bad. On Friday night Sir Arthur Pinero gave a dinner party of 24 to all the swells in the world. I was one of the youngest. The beauty of dining with old men is that they go home early. The affair began at 8 and was over at 10.45. I left Barrie and A. E. W. Mason standing in Pall Mall wondering what they should do with the rest of the evening. Yet Barrie must be nearer 70 than 60. I am extremely busy today. Yet I shall not write anything —merely think. That is why I am dictating everything and clearing up the day by 10 a.m. So no more at present from yours avuncularly truly,

A. B.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 26.3.28.

I was at the Actors' Benevolent Ball last night and am not yet dressed this morning (9.30), and feeling rather flat. Otherwise very well. All I know at this present is that we are living an extremely full life, nightly and lunchly and dinnerly. Cochran's revue is an *immense* success in London. So it ought to be. The first night went very smoothly, and the performance was over by 11 o'clock—a thing unheard-of in first nights of a revue. I have not yet seen Charles to talk to, but I hear that he is delighted with things, and with himself. Tonight I have been invited to the first performance of "Wings," and am going. At first I said I would not go but in the end I graciously accepted two tickets. Why they should give tickets away for such a film as "Wings" is said to be, I cannot imagine.

Your surviving uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 2.4.28.

I had the best night's sleep, Saturday night, I've had for probably 20 years—to wit $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours. But on the whole my sleeping has been evil. Tania came for lunch yesterday, just returned from her continental tour, on which apparently she had a real success in Berlin and in Vienna. She is tired and is losing weight, but very cheerful and larkish. We had a dinner at the Yacht Club last night (8) followed by a party of 25–30. It ended sooner than I had hoped for—12.45. Anita Loos was to have come 'on' from the dress rehearsal of "G. Prefer B." We telephoned her at 12.55, and learned that Act III had just begun. So we went to bed. First night tonight, at which we shall be present. I hear the thing is awful. Thursday we are driving down to Sidmouth for Easter. We tried to get into a decent hotel at Torquay, but couldn't. Everything full. I'm rather enfeebled today, after last night: but work is proceeding—somewhat. No news. Can't write any more. I won't say anything about marriage. You can only learn it for yourself. But there is a lot of goodwill floating about in your favour.

Your post-card expecting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 11.4.28.

I'm glad your marriage went off so inoffensively; but I expected it would. These things usually do, for the reason that everybody concerned realises as the moment approaches that a serious effort must be made to impress the world that all is for the best in the world. I trust you are now happy. I suppose you didn't introduce yourself to Shaw. He and his Charlotte would have been most receptive and hospitable. Charlotte adores me. The papers were full of sunshine, but we didn't have a lot of it, except on Friday, which was warm. The rest of the time, some rain, but quantities of chill E wind. Dartmoor on Saturday was bleak and bitter. We went to Torquay Sunday and saw the St. John Ervines. Sidmouth is all right, except that it is relaxing and mitigates one's exuberant energy too much. We walked $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the top of Dartmoor and didn't feel it; but $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles near Sidmouth makes you feel like a leaking tyre. The car behaved well. On the way home a Sunbeam, very well driven by an owner-driver, passed us. This could not be permitted; but even after passing us he continued to increase his lead when we were doing 53 m.p.h. However, we left him in the end. The fellow could drive. As a rule nothing passes us except motor bikes. Some of these fellows must do 70 sometimes. They have also an enormous advantage in the matter of cutting-in. I must say that Atkinson, to his credit, never attempts to cut in. I could have made £4,000 by gambling in Columbia Gramophones, if I had been prepared to depart from my cast iron rule of not buying any shares that I can't pay cash for. Dining with the Aldous Huxleys tonight. "Man with red hair" tomorrow night. My play has been stuck for about 3 weeks. It must now be unstuck.

Your attentive uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 17.4.28.

Thanks for letter. Very interesting. But allow me to warn you against using the word 'necessities' when you mean 'necessaries.' The 2 words have quite different meanings. Look them up in the dick. If you have no good dick I daresay I can

give you one. Also I can send you books from time to time—I mean to keep. None of them would fall below a certain standard, but I don't say they would all be flyers. I expect I sell about £2 worth of review copies every week. Some would suit you, of these. Last evening I and Tania went to "The Trial of Mary Dugan," which I consider has been most grossly over-praised. I was fantastically bored by it. I am now in the film world again. British International Pictures is managed by a business acquaintance of mine; and they have lots of money, so when he asked me to take some I saw no reason why he shouldn't. He said their producer was Dupont. I had never heard of Dupont (to my knowledge), but when he said that Dupont was the producer of "Vaudeville" my ears cocked forward, as "Vaudeville" is the finest film I've ever seen except "The Gold Rush." Thorpe (the manager) and Dupont took me to see Dupont's new film, "Moulin Rouge," on Saturday night. The story is not very good (Dupont foolishly wrote it himself), but as a production "Moulin Rouge" now stands first in my esteem. It is full of scenic and compositional and other marvels—really beautiful and original. I thought the motor car could never be decently treated again on a film: but Dupont has done the motor car thrill quite freshly and intensely. So I am writing a film. Dupont is an artist. Thorpe and Dupont will be here in a minute or 2 (10.15) to see me.

Your pleaséd uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 24.4.28.

Thank you. Well of course you ought to have and to consult frequently a good dictionary. I am sending you a dictionary. You shall also have some books. It seems to me that you would prefer Sark to Guernsey. Guernsey is terribly overrun with holidayists. Sark is overrun, but very much less so. But of course if you want to go every night to the cinema, St. Peter Port is your place. I went up to British International Pictures Ltd's studios at Elstree last week. They are immense. I am told they are as good as anything in the world. They are certainly as good as the Ufa studios in Berlin, which I have seen. I am now supposed to be writing a film for the aforesaid com-

pany, but I am not actually writing it. I await the return of Dupont from Stockholm, where "Moulin Rouge" has just been produced. I like Dupont. He is an artist—rather rare in the film world. As soon as I begin writing the film, my troubles will also begin. On Sunday we drove down to a house at Aldwick (Bognor), and had an excellent simple time. There is now a project for buying a plot of land there. Apparently only three plots are left for sale. The road is private, and everything snug. Value going up. Etc., etc. I am very busy trying to write a play and not succeeding.

Your toiling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 8.5.28.

You are right: the weather will not last. It was very cold this morn, when I saw Cynthia Noble and Alfred Beit off by the 9 a.m. for Paris. Alfred Beit only caught the train by 3 minutes—or 2½. He arrived in a state of considerable mental disturbance. Old Mr. Saxton Noble came to see his child off. He hadn't shaved. His necktie was all crooked. His coat collar showed above his overcoat collar. I adjusted the 2 latter items; but I thought I had better not shave him on the platform. Now *I* was not only completely dressed, in my finest R.A. private view style (vide press); but I had answered my correspondence and given all secretarial instructions. I'm going to "Götterdämmerung" this afternoon with Tania. It is a day's work; begins at 4.30 and ends at 11 or so. True, we dine in between. But it is a day's work. I sat on my first Film Board of Directors yesterday. They wanted me to be chairman, but I wouldn't. I've finished Act III of my playlet, and shan't do the fourth act until after I've done my film, which I begin tomorrow. The scheme and the plot of it are already arranged. I don't know what I shall do at the week-end. I may stay strictly at home and work. You seem to be doing quite your full share of entertaining. So do I seem to be doing the same. Today, Thursday and Friday I am entertaining 3 different women. Tomorrow I go to Tallulah's first night with Mr. Tayler. She *may* act in my film.

Your cinematic uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 15.5.28.

I went down to Beaverbrook's new house at Newmarket Sunday morn, and returned yesterday afternoon. Had a great but a too arduous time. At 8.3 a.m. yesterday I was on Newmarket Heath. Seventeen hundred horses at the gallops, mounted by 1,700 boys or men. And from trainers and knowing spectators you were hearing such remarks as: "See that mare. Cost £10,000. Half sister to that French horse that won the—" etc. I am told (by its trainer) that the winner of the Derby will be "Royal Minstrel." He looked all right. All Newmarket exists for and on racing, and racing exists for and on gambling, and I am credibly informed that there really is a lot of hanky panky. What struck me as much as anything was the fact that the lowest price for a stallion's services to a mare is £500. Some love! Boy. I am really too busy. "World Today" article has to be finished; also E.S. stuff; also film; also play. Then the opera, and innumerable socialities. Hannen Swaffer is coming to see me this morning about something. The film people wanted me to go down to Elstree to see them because their chairman is going to America on Friday! It is 35 minutes' hard drive to Elstree. I refused. They are only unduly anxious about the date of delivery of my work. They hated to put down £1,000 before I began. But they had to. Of course if it had been a question of a producer, they would have put down £10,000 and thought nothing of it. But an author. However, their education is progressing. Yes, I am very busy.

Your rushing fiery uncle.

Heard Sophie Tucker last night. She is still *very* fine—in rotten songs.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 22.5.28.

I am preternaturally busy, finishing a film. Writing about 2,500 words a day. The strain is considerable. I must finish it on Friday—or I can't go away at Whitsun, to the Roderick Jones's, with any satisfaction. Also I have ½ promised it for Saturday. Many engagements also. Thomas Bodkin (over from

Ireland) came to dinner last night, and we took him to "The Taming of the Shrew" in modern clothes at the Court. A lot of this is really very funny. And the motor car scene is equal to Harry Tate—in fact, better. But it is all preposterous. Then we went on to a ball at Mrs. Maugham's. But I left at 11.55 and was in bed before 12.30. We are glad to hear of the gradual elaboration of your nidification activities—especially the garden. The garden is fine scheme. I sent you a 1923 Michelin Guide the other day. Thought it might be useful. You can have more books when you want them. We're dining with Mr. Tayler tonight and going to "Love in a Village." I hope we shan't be bored by the piece. I met Adolf Menjou last night, and rather liked him. (His wife is very filmy indeed.) He was very nice and decent.

Your filming uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 26.5.28.

"Here's Richness." This is rather a good quotation apropos of the contents of the box, for which much thanks. True, it is my birthday tomorrow, and the King's today. We went to see "This Year of Grace" again last night, with Rudolf Kommer. He took us and gave us a fine dinner *ante*. This show wears very well. They have a performing horse in it now (the Brothers Griffiths), which makes the high-minded laugh like anything. I'm now just off to Victoria Station to meet Kommer on business.

Your Whitling uncle.

A. B. made a mistake here. Queen Mary was born on 26th May, 1867. A. B. was born 27th May, 1867. King George V was born 3rd June, 1865.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 4.6.28.

Yesterday I went down to Beaverbrook's at Cherkley for lunch, and found a lot of gloomy and silent people there. Enlivened them somewhat, but not enough. However, had a

nice drive. Life here is rather running over. Have too much to do. It was a great relief to me the other day to learn from the managing director and the producer (Dupont) of British International Films Ltd. that the film which I have written for them is absolutely perfect from their point of view. I have never before seen men so enthusiastic about any work of mine as they were. They immediately asked me to write another film for them. But my policy in such a case is always to hang fire, to make difficulties, to say that I cannot, etc. But I shall probably write them another film all the same. The difficulties and the delays only whet their appetite. There was to have been some tennis today in the square but it is off on account of the indisposition of one of the players—a female. I am not sorry, as I had promised to play and really too busy to find time to play. I hope you read my article in the "Daily News" on Saturday. At any rate it was better than the article of the Bishop on Friday.

Your fertile uncle.

(Written) P.S.—I did play 1 hour's tennis after all.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.6.28.

Your budget is not foolproof if it doesn't include raiment. See a brief article by me in next Sunday's "Express." I am in a great hurry, being just off to the barber's: most important. A very burstingly over-full time at present, socially and otherwise. There is a supper party at the Garrick Club (2 sexes) tonight, given by Lutyens and Denison Ross, after which I expect to be a wreck. We have not had one quiet evening for over a week. However, Mr. Doran leaves on Saturday morning: that will lighten things a bit. I think I am going to do another film soonish. Anyhow British International Pictures are very keen for me to do them another one. They submitted one idea, and I turned it down. They then submitted another, which clasped me in its clutch at once. At present I am chiefly doing chores. I have cleared up everything in connection with my Mediterranean book—all proofs finished and illustrations

arranged and passed. We expect to leave here on the 30th for Paris Plage. We saw "Alibi" last night. Laughton is wondrous in it. Play putrid. Much trouble with Lady Colefax through persistently refusing her invitations: she is not accustomed to this, and is very cross. But she will get over it. She is a nice woman, but a hostess first and last. We happen to be one of her plums. I expect I must go to the Eadie memorial service tomorrow. Then, immediately after, lunch with Harry Preston at the Embassy.

Your Austin-12-buying-for-continent uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 18.6.28.

The Austin XII is a pretty good car. I paid £175 for it; the value seems wonderful to me, in my simplicity. I hope and trust it may be for sale in the early autumn: but there is now developing a theory, full of menace, that it is cheaper to keep 2 cars than one. It seems you save more on the petrol than the cost of the garage! The Austin XII is 1926 make, and condition apparently perfect. I have now begun the last act of my play (no title yet). I ought to finish it in about 5 days, with luck. I am lunching with British International Pictures tomorrow, apropos of a suggested new film. The velvet is rather mine there, as they want me more than I want them. I had an evening to myself last night. I went forth to bed at an early hour, and had a good night. I had toiled all the Sabbath day. Eugene Goossens dined here on Saturday night and afterwards played through the pf. score of our opera "Judith." I don't esteem the music very highly; but it is certainly rather dramatic and has in it, so far as I can judge, the elements of success. Eugene says (with truth) that the libretto is perfect! I understand that it is to be produced at C. Garden next season; but if the operatic world is like the theatrical world (probably it is more so) I should say that the event is gravely doubtful. However, there you are. The weather here has not been good, but it has been just good enough for tennis in the square, where I have played three sets. The social whirl continues; but so does the work.

Your super-active uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 26.6.28.

Sweet Sir,

Thanks for your dramatic epistle. The Keebles gave an immense dinner, reception, dancing, bridge, supper affair last night at Claridge's. We were at the dinner, but left at 11.30, when the supper was starting. I cannot stand these interminable nights. Lord Melchett complete with wife came at about 11.15. I might have danced with her, but didn't. Thank God we were home before 12. Still, I didn't have a good night. Tonight, dinner at Colefaxes. Tomorrow Russian ballet. Thursday: dinner (and people afterwards) here. I fear it will be very late. Yes. I fear fearsomely. I am now writing several "Evening Standard" articles and a "Sunday Pictorial" article in advance. So I am busy, but not tiresomely so. The play is all finished and will be delivered to Gerald du Maurier this night.

Your finishing uncle.

Paris Plage. 4.7.28.

Thanks for letter received this morning only. All is very well except that I am insomniac. This house is small but well appointed, and most ingeniously planned. Small garden. Also a garage. Cook (Italian) really fine. There are 2 garden bedrooms. Atkinson sleeps in one. Convenient. Sands vast: which makes the sea a long way off. Curious mixture, this place, of high fashion and petite bourgeoisie. I am doing nothing. I shall probably have to go to London for the week-end as du Maurier is supposed to be doing my newest play at the St. James's next month. But I think everything depends on his partner Gilbert Miller, from whom I have had no definite news. Your holiday is approaching. Excuse more now. I only had 2 h. sleep.

Your cassé uncle.

The insomnia is now over. But it was not assisted away by a sudden journey to London on Friday to see Gerald du Maurier and Gilbert Miller, and return on Saturday. Especially as I didn't go to bed till 2 a.m. Saturday morning: party, half business, half comic, chez Viola Tree. I met Sir John Cadman on the way to London, and lunched with him in the train. Hadn't seen him for many years. He is now Chairman of Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which has a total pay roll of about 30,000 immortal souls. Might be something for you there! I shall be seeing him again, as he is very anxious for me to go out to Persia to view his activities (doubtless with a view to writing them up!)—not that I ever shall on this earth! Still, I will keep in with him. We seem to be settled down here now. Fine meals. Bathing hut at the nearest point on the beach (5 minutes). I don't bathe. The sea is generally about 1½ miles off, and after that you would have to paddle another mile or so to get out of your depth. French people prefer splashing to swimming; so it suits them. The Swinnertons are staying at a small hotel close by, where the food is excellent. Unhappily they leave on Friday. Meantime we enjoy them. We hear that the season is very bad, but there appear to be always about 100,000 children on the beach. We went up to the centre of fashions last evening, and found it very deserted and melancholic. Restaurants and casino immensely sad with more waiters and attendants than money spenders. Weather on the whole excellent. Two ½ gales, but only transitory; it invariably clears up in the mornings. We made an excursion to Amiens on Monday; grand lunch, and a visit to the cathedral. On the way home, a cracking sound! Top leaf of near front spring broken. I wired at once for a new one, and yesterday I heard that it was on the way; but it isn't here yet. Atkinson patched up the damage with 2 pieces of wood and a bit of stolen wire, and the car can travel safely up to 30 m.p.h. on a fair road.

Your basking uncle.

Paris Plage. 18.7.28.

Thanks for yours of Monday which arrived this morning. Even London letters seem generally to take 2 days (actual time of journey for passengers $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours!) Sometimes they take a week. No doubt the fault is on this side. A spring for the Austin which ought to have arrived 8 days ago has still not arrived, and can't be heard of anywhere. I have to go to London again tomorrow, dash it! to talk to du Maurier about the play; he is engaged in the early rehearsals and is a great worrier before the Lord. Like a child in some respects. We shall stay on here after the 30th. We sought rooms in two small hotels, and were not wholly pleased with what we found. Then we went to the newest big hotel (The Grand Hotel, on the sea front) and got better accommodation for less money. So that, for the moment, we are content. The weather remains astonishing. Too much wind sometimes (e.g. yesterday, N. wind) but sunshine continuous—sunrise to sunset, day after day. The beach here is vast, but it has defects. The distance between H.W. and L.W. is too great. The thing is too flat. Some of it is too dry and the sand thereof is like that of an hour-glass, and the rest is too damp. Although too flat as a whole, the beach has long dents in it. Hence dangerous at H.W. This morning the town had one motor boat (with 3 men) two row boats (a man each) and 3 men at the water's edge with ropes etc.—to look after bathers. True most bathers, especially French, are $\frac{1}{2}$ idiots. The fashionable part of Le T.—P.P. is away from the beach, in the forest (1 mile between them at most). This forest part is très chic. We went to the races Sunday. Very agreeable. But we lost 350 frs. at the totalisator. Ought to have lost less but we forgot to demand our money on a horse backed for a place. Simply forgot. A bit thick! No aeroplanes for me, thanks. I am still short of sleep.

Your insomniac uncle.

Paris Plage. 25.7.28.

You seem to be having a pretty variegated time; but five sleeping (?) in the flat: rather a lot. I wonder if your father slept. My own snoozing is now better again. It has been very

bad. I had to go to London once more on Thursday last. I returned here on Saturday, having presided at 4 rehearsals of my still unnamed play at the St. James's. It appears to be shaping rather well. But du Maurier is very nervous about his efficiency in producing a play that is not a crime drama. However, the rehearsals were very agreeable, and I went to bed early. On Friday I dined with Beaverbrook, Castlerosse, and another; and heard the most gloomy accounts of the British trade situation. Tomorrow we go to a place beyond Dieppe to spend one night at the Château of Ethel Sands, whom you know. It is 90 miles each way. So far the weather has been tolerable. Out of 26 days, one half day of wet and one half day of mist. The rest chiefly sunshine and warmth. For the moment I am doing *no* work. This won't last. I have read more these last 3 weeks than in the last 3 months. I seem to spend most of my time sitting on the beach which is now fuller. Next week is the "Grande Semaine."

Your constant uncle.

Grand Hotel, Paris Plage. 2.8.28.

Thanks for yours of Monday received Thursday morning. The smaller script is due to the replacement of an old nib in one of my 2 fountain pens. I seldom used this pen of late because the nib had ceased years ago to be good. At last I collected the money to buy a new nib, and so am using this pen more than my customary pen. (These details cannot be interesting: but you mentioned the matter.) I remember the day when I used to get a column of a newspaper on to a sheet smaller than this sheet. We moved to the hotel on Monday. It is a good hotel, with good food and good service and manners. I have had a chill. After being here for more than a month, we went into the baccarat rooms at the Casino last night for the first time. They are fine—better than those at Cannes or Monte Carlo. But the spectacle of crowds of people with more money than they know how to handle with decency, idling their time and injuring their health, is not inspiring. I understand that the play goes on nightly till 6 a.m. We met the Fitzgeralds and Howard Wyndham, and I was grossly stared at by young females

who recognised my phizog. Still, the place has charm, which is helped by the fact that the women are extremely well dressed and the whole group of casino, restaurant and hotels is situated in the middle of a wood. In fact as a seaside place I put Le Touquet highest on the continent. Much better than Deauville, Cannes, Ostende, Monte Carlo, and nearly equal to Brighton, though quite different and 1,000,000 times "smarter." We drove over for the night last Thursday to Ethel Sands' Louis XVIth Château, and had a fine time. 93 miles each way. We had lunch at Tréport, which is the slatternliest seaside resort I ever saw. We have renounced the opinion that all French resorts are superior to all English ones. Where French resorts have the pull is in the food and in the absence of licensing restrictions. In nothing else. But of course there is *no* 'smart' seaside resort in Britain. Not one. My play is still not named. Work of all kinds is piling up most formidably for my return. I refuse to contemplate the pile at all.

Your idle uncle.

Grand Hotel, Paris Plage. 10.8.28.

The interweaving of correspondence is getting later and later and looser and looser. I only received your letter yesterday morning, and all day yesterday I was in bed (and out) with acute diarrhœa and the most robustious flatulence, incapable of doing anything. I am better this morning (7.30) but I am a vacuum and an enfeebled vacuum. We are supposed to be going to lunch today with Gilbert Miller and spouse at Montreuil; but it does not seem to be quite sure yet that we shall. Seaton is all right, but quite small and with no special attractions. Beer I do *not* like. It has become quite the conventional seaside resort, and I noticed in the principal hotel a warning card to the effect that electric light was turned off at 11 p.m.! Why? That alone would put me right off any place. We leave this place, district and country on Tuesday next, and ought to get to Victoria at 3.30 p.m. I quiver at the thought of the work which lies before me on my return. And anyhow I am very pale today. I can write no more. All right again tomorrow D.V.

Your breezy uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 15.8.28.

We got back yesterday afternoon, still alive. The journey from Boulogne is now very easy for us, thanks to my having given an autographed copy of one of my books to a purser who admires me to the extent of getting our luggage through the customs without examination. On the whole we have had splendid weather; though there has been too much wind, there was really very little rain indeed. I doubt whether the climate is quite suitable. In every other respect Le Touquet takes the first prize. Forest, sea, sands, excursions, battlefields, polo, tennis, racing, gambling, restaurants, fine shops, fine food, walks, frocks, good villas, good hotels. The place cannot be called cheap. We cannot sell the Austin until the Rolls has been re-bodied and this business has not yet begun. The Austin is a very satisfactory car indeed. Gilbert Miller whom we saw several times, has a Hispano, in which he averages 53 on long distances. I now have a great deal of urgent work to do. The rehearsals of the play will be resumed next Monday, and then will follow some ten or twelve days of hecticity. I am just finishing up arrears due to six weeks' absence.

Your buckling-to uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 21.8.28.

Your esteemed, for which thanksgivings, arrived not on Tuesday morning but on Monday at 8.30 p.m. just as I was going out to witness Fairbanks in "The Gaucho." I think we may go away again as soon as the play is produced, which will be about the 1st prox., I opine. The rehearsals are resumed today and I'm just going off to the theatre. They ought to have been resumed yesterday and I rather raised Cain about a delay of which I received no warning. Still, you always have to remember that you are dealing with stage artists. All alike. It is *in* them, and must be accepted. No title yet found for this play, and the press manager is raging for it. But as one will have to be found in the next day or two I don't worry. We have

ordered a new All-Weather body for the Rolls. It will take 10 weeks. We have made enquiries, and do you know that the Barker or Hooper price for A.W. bodies is at lowest £950. Well, you could buy a fine Packard new and all complete for that. I'm getting ours from Coopers, and it is to cost £525, which seems to me a dickens of a lot. Grand interview yesterday to settle the affair. I think it will be all right. "The Gaucho" film is preposterous in some ways; but in others rather good. (The cattle stampede is very effective.) I don't expect to be believed when I say that I had never before seen D.F. on the screen (though I have yarned with him in private). But it is so. I think he is very good indeed in his own line. And for a man of 40—he must be over 40—his agility is most remarkable. Rather grand to see the New Gallery, packed with people. I should like play audiences of that size. Yes! I have now been back one week less 6 hours, and I have written 4 articles, corrected proofs of a book, cleared up all arrears, spent one day laid aside (bad sleeping), and one day going down to Aldwick to see Diana Cooper and Co. Slow work driving on Sunday in August—especially the return! We may go to Annecy—never been there. A bracing place is required. Annecy is 1470 feet up, though on a lake. On the other hand we mayn't go anywhere. Later, I may have to travel professionally. The State Theatre at Stockholm is opening its season with "The Great Adv." and I was officially invited to attend. I refused. I felt I couldn't stand it.

Your urgent uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 28.8.28.

Now I really am busy. I lost a complete day yesterday through insomnia. The rest of the week will be sultry. There is strong opposition to the London first night being on a Saturday. Both Agate and Ervine have written to me to protest. I can remain quite calm, because I have no belief in the influence of criticisms on the success of plays. I fear I shall not be able to come to the Liverpool first night. Thanks all the same. The

rehearsals have been going quite well. But I have a telephone message from du M. this morning asking me to lunch with him today on a matter "rather important." God knows what it is. He is a very nervous person. (Not God!) We had Thornton Wilder and his sister to dinner last night. They are both very satisfactory, and he particularly is full of brains. But rather nervous and impulsive in speech. We all got on excellently. I must now close. Duty calls very loudly.

Your rapid uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 4.9.28.

I was not at the first night of "The Return Journey." But I know the reception was lukewarm. Not that I take any notice of the views of a first night audience. I spent yesterday at the theatre making certain small changes to please Gerald. He is a most conscientious and fertile producer, and delightful to work with. (So am I.) The second night was good. We leave Victoria today at 1.50 for the Imperial Palace Hotel, Haute Savoie, France. We ought to be there a week or a fortnight. I am somewhat exhausted. Saturday I spent on my film "Piccadilly." For the night-club scenes they have built a complete club, with kitchens, offices, dressing rooms and all. It is larger than the Embassy, and far more beautiful. The production will cost £50,000. These people too are very nice to work with. I haven't been doing very much lately except produce plays and write articles. I haven't told you about the dinner with Gene Tunney. I was put next to him as he is one of my fans. I found he couldn't see subtle jocularity, so I made simple jokes, which he *did* see. We got on splendidly. He made a good and a bold speech, and created an immense effect among the sporting section of the guests. I had to propose Harry Preston's health. It was a good evening up to 11 p.m. and then a bore till 11.40, when I went home, being the first to go except 2 journalists. Many things have to be arranged.

Your departing uncle.

Annecy. 13.9.28.

"The Return J." did splendidly at the St. J's in the first week. Startled the alleged experts who were fixed in their hearts for a failure! In fact it made a profit of over £500. I don't know about this week yet. But I don't count too much on the piece. It is too original and unsparing in plot and treatment for any London theatre public. The only thing that brings people into the St. J's Theatre is the interest of the mere story. Gerald does not do the hero very well—because there are big love scenes full of passion, and Gerald can only make love well while pouring out a whisky and soda or something for himself or for the object of his lust. By the way, Gerald is a most domestic man, with a very nice simple wife and two highly attractive and headstrong daughters of 21 or so; and he leads a regular life quite unlike that of the stage. We went over to Geneva to lunch with Diana and Duff Cooper and see the League functioning. Came back in the late afternoon. I think the League is 'shaping' all right. We've been excursioning with Sir F. Keeble and Lillah ditto. I've talked to him about you. He is now suffering a cure at Aix-Les-Bains. Personally I have little belief in these cures. I must now close, as Victor Cazalet M.P. has afflicted us with his bright youthful presence for lunch. He has come over from Geneva.

Your vegetating uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 20.9.28.

Thanks for missive. We got back last night after 2 days' travelling. It is now 7.15 a.m. So time is not being wasted. It mustn't be. I'm frightened by the amount and the variety of work that at present confronts me. I might feel easier if I hadn't promised to write a book(let) about God for the Bishop of Liverpool. I've begun it. But I've only begun it. I always knew I knew nothing about God, and my idea is that nobody else does either. We have really enjoyed Annecy. It is a *place.* But I am pained to hear that you didn't know where it was.

I can't think of any news, except that for the moment I am *not* short of sleep. Still 2 days travelling enfeebles. Yesterday morning in Paris was marvellous.

Your re-established uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 25.9.28.

I am once more very busy,—in full blast. My booklet about the religious situation is now nearly ½ done. I can approach it with a perfectly fresh eye because I know nothing about it, or God or the Holy Ghost or anything. This gives me a marked advantage over religious writers and experts. I saw my play on Thursday, and wondered why anyone should go and see it at all,—the last act is so *harrowing*. The audiences are large, but only a small percentage of them understand what they are witnessing—that is obvious. Also the play is quite unlike all other West End plays—especially in tone, and people are therefore déroutés. Quite natural. Also there is present in it my accursed judicial detachment. However, the receipts are excellent—so far, though I can't understand how they can continue to be so. We yesterday received a "Swedish housekeeper-cook" into this household. Young. Linguistic. Educated. Agreeable. And so on. But whether she can cook and keep house God alone yet knows. Of course we'd never seen her before. She arrived at Tilbury direct from Stockholm yesterday morning. This is about all. I must turn towards God instantly, as I have to try on a new dressing gown at 12.15.

Your seeking uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 2.10.28.

We now seem to have taken up tennis here in the Square. Tomorrow there is to be a great tournament (great but brief) in which will figure H. G. W., A. G. G., and me. We had a professional lady yesterday. She showed me that I had been serving wrong all my life. I tried the right way, but of course it would have ruined me for the tournament. To think that

through inefficiency, slackness, and so on I never took the trouble to have some lessons. And now too late! Too late! Let this be a lesson to the young! Great luncheon here today. Great dinner party tonight. Heavy day! I'm getting towards the end of my booklet on the religious situation. I hope you didn't read my article in "Britannia" No. 1, as some idiot of a sub-sub-editor cut out the whole point of the article. This week they are to apologise. No time for more. Tailor just coming to repent of his sins.

Your sartorial uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 9.10.28.

I've had a mild attack of flu. Only 2 days in bed; but it was more than I wanted. I think I am now fully recovered. What L.M.S. stock do you own? Is it the 6% pref? I was thinking of buying some of these for a trust but it seems to me I have thought 4 days too long. I might have got them at 66. They are now over 70. Brokers gave me a most imperative tip to buy Metropole Gramophones. So I did. They at once went down. I am still told that they will double in value in due course. God keep us all! A man named Lissenden has written to me with his novel "The Revolt," and asked me to mention it in one of my articles. He said he had talked to you as to me. Rather cheek, I thought. As his object in writing the book is to fight Communism—what a crew!—I have told him that I will examine the book, but I never discuss politics in my literary articles. "The Return Journey" is not doing so well now, and I think the interest in it is approaching exhaustion. This is a pity; but the stage is the stage. In Liverpool the receipts of "Mr. Prohack" reached a far far higher average than those of "Body and Soul," and the Playhouse must have done very well out of it indeed. We shan't have the Rolls back for a month yet. I'm getting rather tired of the Austin, though it is a very good car—in my opinion: which is worth nothing—I mean the opinion. I have now cleared up all my odd jobs, including my booklet on religion, and my next nuisance is to finish off my second film. This is all the news up to date.

Your renewed uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 15.10.28.

Thanks for yours, so unusually early. The fact is, Miss Nerney neglected her instructions to remind me annually of your birthday. I am no good at remembering birthdays. I know at this moment that your birthday is the 12th, but long before next year I shall have forgotten it. Pity! I enclose cheque for a b'day gift, hoping it will find you better than it leaves me at present. I was supposed to have recovered from my flu last Monday, but since then I have been spending the mornings in bed, as I had no energy and suffered from pains daily until lunchtime. I began to get definitely better yesterday, and I am still definitely better today. But I am not yet utterly and dazzlingly bright. Also the change in the weather has encouraged my rheumatism to return. However, it's all right, really. Also I haven't been doing any work, except articles for a week past. I was up at British International studios last Thursday and settled some points about the next film; and I made the acquaintance of Gilda Gray, the Polish star in "Piccadilly." We at once became highly intimate, and I am supposed to be going as the chief guest to her birthday party Wednesday week. The Viennese star in the Noel Coward revue (I can't remember the name) Tilly Losch came to see us yesterday afternoon with Rudolf Kommer and Alfie Mason. She is an agreeable little piece. Kommer is buying "The Return Journey" for Germany and Austria. I have sold it for Scandinavia. And it is to be produced in English in Paris. *But* I will lay 10 to 1 it won't have more than 100 performances in London. Gerald and wife and others are coming to dinner next Sunday. I now have to work at full speed on the 2nd film for British International. By the way, the scenario of "Piccadilly" is to appear in the new 2d film weekly entitled "The Film Weekly" beginning Oct 22. The money I got for this I invested in the new shares of British International which I am solemnly informed are very good. Anyhow I have great esteem for the sagacity of the managers of B.I. I have looked at Lissenden's book. No good.

Your unbuckled uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. *Typewritten.* 23.10.28.

I am still suffering from the sequelæ of flu. With me it takes the form of neuralgic pains, especially in the mouth. These get violent every night just as I am going to bed, and they have kept me awake every night for a week past until 2 or 3 a.m. Otherwise I am very well, and going about my work much as usual.

Re Lux Toilet. After observing the advertisements of this for several days and reading the statement that L.T. could be obtained at any grocers, etc., I asked for a tablet to be got. Three shops were tried. Two of them had never heard of L.T. The third had heard of it and was expecting some sometime. After about a week Miss Nerney got some at the Stores. This experience seems to indicate that L.B's travelling is somewhat at fault, or that their publicity is untimely. I think that the soap is really excellent. But you have to get it first.

Despite flu we are living a most overflowing life. No free quiet evening for a fortnight. We had du Maurier and others on Sunday, and Ravel and others last night. Tonight Harold Dearden gives a dinner at the Garrick Club. Tomorrow night we are going to Gilda Gray's birthday dinner at Kings Langley. What this will be like I have not the least idea. I do not object to her; but I fear her filmy friends. We can but pray. Anyhow it would not have done for me to refuse the invitation. I was so feeble this morning that I rang to have my tea in bed, but the bell was out of order so I had to come downstairs after all, and here I am, writing this on the dining room table. We hope that you will not have the flu.

Your battered uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 30.10.28.

Well, I never knew Dewar got his Dewarisms from not—himself. I have certainly heard him make one or two on the spur of the moment. Per contra, I have heard him make rotten speeches—perhaps when the late Sir James Percy was ill or gloomy. Why did he die? I had a recurrence of frontal neuralgia etc. for a day or 2; but it is getting better again. Lack of sleep

has been the chief trouble. On Friday we had Lili d'Alvarez to meet G. B. S. at dinner. She desired it. On leaving, G. B. S. said to me in the hall: "*That's* a very rum young lady. Her mind doesn't work like ours do." And he said no more. Our new wireless is not yet working properly. But we can get 52 stations. We can also get a lot of knocking, whistling, shrieking, and rumbling. Last night was the 1st quiet evening I have had for a fortnight. Give me quiet evenings—that is what I say.

Your revivifying uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 6.11.28.

My new film is causing me a lot of painful cerebration. I have been cerebrating in the middle of a long dark tunnel for some time; but now I see a pin-point of light at the far end. We had a great dinner party here on Friday night; it was perfectly uproarious. Wells, who invited himself, and for whom there was not really room, was the fount of the frolic, and he stayed last. Sibyl Colefax stayed till midnight, and had to leave Waterloo the next morn at 8 a.m. for U.S.A.! I went up to Elstree to see progress in my "Piccadilly" film last week, and witnessed some of the big club scenes. 300 guests in evening togs on the floor of the said club! An astonishing sight! But it is the emotional scenes in small rooms that I am worrying about, and I haven't had one glimpse of them yet. Still, I can't live at Elstree. "The Return Journey" is now on its last legs, believe me. We have a dinner here tonight, a dinner at the Hutchinsons' Wednesday, the opening of the new Empire Theatre Thursday, and a dinner at Richmond Temple's on Friday. I shall have a week-end of work—and I need it; for my schedule is knocked all to bits, and must be repaired.

Your recuperating uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.11.28.

After all, I didn't do a vast amount of work; but I reflected. On Saturday night I had the young author Henry Williamson to dinner. He may become very big. We had an excellent

evening, though it did end a bit too late. Last night I dined at Max Beaverbrook's (who has reopened his big Stornoway House), to go to the Albert Hall Festival. I asked the chauffeur who was to be at dinner, and when he said "Dean Inge" I replied "Good God!" However, I liked the Dean, who is not at all gloomy, but he is very deaf. His wife is fine. The only other people were Reginald McKenna and Churchill. Churchill began very badly by saying that he had just been reading a book of mine. "Which?" "Rampole Island." I said "You've made an awful gaffe." He actually blushed. Yes! "What *was* I thinking of?" said he. The Festival at the Albert Hall was exceedingly impressive. All organised by a young man named Wardell on the "Express," who had never organised anything before! We had the box next to King, Queen and Co. After the [illegible]ir we went back to Max's. Dr. Archibald Fleming, the illustrious Presbyterian mandarin of St. Columba's, Pont St., had joined us. I left at midnight. I can now see quite a lot of daylight in my new film. I am going to have tea with Max today to get some finance details for it from him. The weather is super moist; but thank heaven it is not cold and easterly. I have had 3 quite decent nights' rests. We have 3 dinners here this week and one out and one theatre (Lyric, Hammersmith). Birkenhead, besides his 3 English directorships, has got one in an American Company for exploiting English electrical schemes. This is worth £15,000 a year, more, probably, than all the others put together. His articles still remain very bad.

Your renovated uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 20.11.28.

This is one of my busy mornings, as the secretary of the National Institute of Journalists is coming to see me, on some mysterious business as to which I know nothing, at 10 o'clock, and before this I must have all my odd jobs completed. A tile blew off the roof during the gale the other night and dropped on to the bonnet of the Austin, and made a rare dent in it. Happily Atkinson was within. We are now trying to get money for this on the insurance, but I doubt whether we shall succeed.

I hear this morning that the B.B.C. are doing my play "The Stepmother" on the 14th prox. I think that plays performed on the wireless are absurd. Tomorrow night "The Return Journey" begins its run in Paris. On Saturday it ends its run in London. As this immortal play will have had less than 100 performances it is a failure. Indeed Gilbert Miller will have lost some money over it. I shall have lost time over it: which amounts to the same thing, though no manager can ever see this plain point. I went to the big film dinner last night. Except for the fact that I was next to a very nice and interesting man, the affair was simply awful. The film crowd has to be seen en masse to be believed. One woman was carried out by a man, her feet higher than her head, because she would keep on interrupting. Loud cheers. True, I heard that she had once been in a lunatic asylum. Otherwise I should have said that she was merely tipsy. However, I got home early. We are out or have parties here every night this week. It was the same last week, except Sunday. And I am writing my film just as though nothing was happening. We went to "The Critic" last Wednesday and liked it. We go to the first night of "A Hundred Years Old" tomorrow night. My new book is published tomorrow. I will send you a copy. We had Michael Arlen and wife to lunch, Sunday. She is all right. Greek, I think. She has the great and rare quality of not pretending to see a joke when she doesn't see it. She just looks grave.

Your occupied uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 27.11.28.

Short—I mean mine. Thanks. It is 11.30 and I am only just dressed. Spell of bad sleeping. But I slept well last night, and lay around, finicking. Well, when you return books you will get more. The "Med. Scenes" book is now on its way to you. No, you did not tell me that you cycled to the office on a loan. I heard yesterday morning from Rupert Carte that Herbert Sullivan had just died suddenly. Heart. I heard last night at the Garrick Club that he was there the night before he died, playing cards, and apparently extremely bright and well. I

suppose I shall have to go to the funeral: which I regret—I mean the having to go, as well as the cause of the funeral. I hear that the "Return Journey" is doing very nicely thank you in Paris. Why do you want to be calm and quiet? I never am, except at this desk; and I'm older than you (in some ways).

Your sleepy uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 4.12.28.

Thank you. Got up late. Very busy. Bed late, after theatre. We saw Tallulah in "Her Cardboard Lover." It is just an ordinary French farce, well anglicised by "P.G." But French farces are always *much* better than English. Tallulah very brilliant and very vulgar therein. Leslie Howard very brilliant and not vulgar. He played in "The Title" ten years ago, when he was nobody at all. We had Max Beerbohm and others to lunch on Friday. He was just the same as ever; that is to say, perfect, and the wonder of all beholders. I had a long séance with Dupont on Friday night at the Savoy, over the titles of "Piccadilly." I have since written 122 titles. There are about 80 more to do. As you certainly don't know, the main scenes pass in a dance-club, called "The Piccadilly Club" in Piccadilly Circus. The excellent Dupont, knowing not enough of this isle, had a piece of Piccadilly Circus erected at Elstree, and did a night scene with a huge electric sign "The Piccadilly Club." When I pointed out to him that English clubs don't have electric signs, and that everybody would laugh at both him and me, he was electrified: such an idea had never occurred to him. The scene can't be done again, save at great expense. I am trying to get out of the difficulty by making the place a restaurant which merely *calls* itself a 'club' in order to attract customers. It is a scheme, anyhow. Foggy here today. To-night I'm dining with a group of eminent scientists and sociologists (including Sir R. Gregory, the editor of "Nature") apropos of a new monthly that is to be started, called "The Realist." They want my advice. That is natural. But what *isn't* natural is that they want me to write the introductory article for the

first number. This, my dear sir, is summat of a compliment to a mere all-round ignorant journalist who has no exact knowledge about anything.

Your toiling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 11.12.28.

Thanks for your letter. This is, I hope, my last week of writing the new film. It is, and will be, a week of terrific work as I am rather behind my schedule. "Les Sylphides" is delicious. "Vaudeville" is a very fine film indeed. My objection to it is that it would be impossible for athletic heroes to indulge in their nocturnal orgies, as they do, and carry on their work. But Dupont is rather too fond of drunken scenes. There will not be any in "Piccadilly." Nor in the next film. Grosvenor House is one of the ugliest buildings in London. I have not yet seen the inside of the new tube station at Piccadilly. I saw queues waiting there yesterday morning before it was opened. I expect to see it in a day or two. I feel very interested in it. I have not seen the Imperial Chemical Industries building, but I have met the architect, Sir Frank Baines, and I like him. The new Empire is enormous, costly and awful. Regal I have not yet seen. I have suggested to the B.B.C. people that they should remove our wireless set. It is splendid for London and Daventry, but unreliable for continental stations. The Chief Engineer and the "Talks" boss came down the other day to try it, and they had to admit that the results were extremely unsatisfactory. Further, as we seldom have a free evening, do not see how the wireless can be of much use to us.

Your well-meaning uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 18.12.28.

I wouldn't listen to a B.B.C. play for anything. (And I didn't either.) The more often I see "The Cat," the more I like it but it is excessively perverse. Yes, well, *I* heard the Bach B

minor mass about 2 weeks ago. An experience! I'm glad you went so often to the Ballet. It would do you both much good. There seems to be no sign of the Russian ballet in London just yet. I have finished my 2nd film—yesterday, morn. It is almost the length of a novel. Miss Nerney saith she regards it as wasted on a mere film. And I can't get her to see how wrong-headed this attitude is. Strange! We had to go to a dinner and supper party at Lady Colefax's yestereen, and didn't get home till 1 a.m. and didn't get to bed till 2 a.m. Lady Colefax has astounding energy. This woman sent all invitations for last night's party from New York. She got home on Friday night, and this morning she has already left for Egypt! The biscuit is hers. We shall be here for Christmas, thank God! During the last 4 days I dined with Mr. Tayler at the Savoy, with Lord B. at Stornoway House, gave a dinner here, and attended the 1st night of "Pickwick" at the Haymarket. Ethel Sands went with me. "Pickwick" was terrible; its appeal perfectly infantile. We sat next to Dickens's youngest son and wife—Sir Henry Dickens, who is now very old. His attitude was sternly non-committal.

Your relaxing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 21.12.28.

Herewith a tenner. Don't buy a Rolls-Royce with it. Ours has come back with its new body, which is very superior and splendid. We are all fantastically busy before Xmas. All righteous, virtuous, warm, affectionate wishes to you both during your exile. 2 small books are coming to you.

Your tottering uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 28.12.28.

Thanks for thine. The tie and handkerchief, for which thanks also, are a *great* success. I have never told you that a black and white check handkerchief which you once gave me turned into a blue and white check after being washed. After shopping in

the rain and in the King's Road on Saturday night, I had a chill, and stayed in the house on Sunday and Monday and in my thickest dressing gown. I went out for lunch on Xmas Day (Mayfair Hotel—good) and had a recrudescence of the chill. We had a few people in on Xmas Night, for dinner and afterwards, and I received them in the same dressing gown. Would they go home? No, they would not. And even when they did start to go there were terrible difficulties about taxis. On Boxing Night, I hear, the taxi famine was much worse even. The chill completely upset my sleeping, which remains upset. Never mind; my film is duly delivered, and I have written 300,000 words this year. I am now going to write a short story or so; I am terribly behind schedule with short stories. We had a great dinner at Sovrani's on Boxing Night with the Roderick Joneses (Reuters). Max Beerbohm and spouse were there. We dined at Sovrani's because the Jones cook walked out of their new house at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Que veux-tu? Les cooks sont comme ça. Our Swedish cook is fine. But if she stays a year it will be the fulfilment of the outside hope of

Your well-wishing uncle for the N.Y.

1929

"Piccadilly" Screened

10 Years of the Lyric

Harrods' Advertising

At Antibes

"The Realist"

Galsworthy's

Parties

Italy

Brittany

With Beaverbrook to Russia

The Savoy Hotel—"Imperial Palace"

"Journey's End"

Christmas Fare

75 Cadogan Square. 1. 1. 29.

Yes, we have Triplex. It cost about £48 extra! The car has had to go back. Rattling! Shock absorbers not well adjusted! Body working a bit loose on chassis! And other jobs to be done. 14 jobs in all. Hope to get it back Saturday. It *looks* fine, and I think will *be* fine. Your accounts are very clear and apparently well kept. My only animadversion is that you have spent nearly a third of your earned income on dissipation, amusement and travel. Seems rather high, to me. So far as I know my chill is now quite cured. But it has had 2 relapses. It has been a great stunt to wear two singlets. The glass went up like a balloon in the night. Today things looked like frost. But now, 7.40 it is raining heavily—and we are faring around in the Austin, which is as draughty as the front of a stove. We dined out last night, N.Y. Eve; but left at 11.15, as we had to go "on" to another party. We didn't tell our hostess that the other party was to take place in this house as I was determined to go to bed early. George Doran Esq. arrived from France (H. G. Wells and W. S. Maugham) on Sunday night, and I lunched with him at the Savoy yesterday. I expect that he and Mr. Tayler and I will dine together tomorrow night and go to a play entitled "Jealousy," of which the entire cast number 2 persons. They say it is good. I am dying to go to the Olympia Circus; I must get someone to go with. Mr. Tayler has been! A bit thick! In four days, including today I have written a short story of 5,700 words and an article of 1,100 words. Sunday we lunched at the du Maurier's, who have a nice large *country* house at Hampstead, with a view over all London, which view, however, only functions about once a week, or even less often. I must go up and dress for dinner, having just returned from a reception-sort-of-thing given by the great Courtaulds to see the new decorations at the Gate Theatre. 'Everybody' was there.

Your healthy uncle.

Oh! Happy New Year to you both.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 8.1.29.

Thanks yours yesterday. This is written from just beside my bed at 3 p.m. I am staying in bed all day. I had the greatest night on Sunday night that I have had for years. 7½ hours in all! But last night the record was *under* an hour, so I was slightly enfeebled this morning, and decided to stay in bed all day. I've done plenty of work. We had a dinner party last night, of which the stars were Max Beerbohm and Thornton Wilder. Happily nobody stayed late. I will now return to bed.

Your bedridden uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 15.1.29.

Of late I have certainly been smoking too much, and I am now struggling against this distressing weakness. I took John last night to the Olympia Circus. Great success, this circus! Some of it fine; but I am intensely bored by performing horses, bears and lions, especially lions. It wanted some courage to produce "Will Shakspeare." I never saw this play, and I can hardly believe that it is good. I dined Sunday with Marjorie Gordon, after long years. She says that "Virginia" is *awful* (she is in it). But John, who has seen it, thinks it is "a great show." Anyhow, I'm not going to see it. Marjorie is now living close by here. I'm very busy. "Accident" is coming to you. Miss Nerney has been changing her abode; so things are a bit behind here.

Your bustling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 29.1.29.

We have a sun-bath installed now in the bathroom. It is self-contained except for the flex—cost £25. I am taking a bath daily; but personally I detect no results. I still have the chest cold that I've now had for a fortnight and I don't feel at all

well. Nevertheless, I am giving the thing a fair show. "Piccadilly" is opening unexpectedly (owing to the failure of somebody's revue) at the Carlton tomorrow (private performance). Public performance Thursday. The film is very good so far as it goes; but very little of the comedy has survived, and the story does not really *end*, it only breaks off. Much of it, however, is first-rate Dupont. Anna Wong is marvellous. Gilda Gray not so good. If I had lived at Elstree for 3 months, I could have got a far better film out of Dupont. I saw the (German) filmed "City of Pleasure" last night. The Blackpool fun-fair scenes etc. are excellent, and the whole production has a certain scale. But every shred of humour has been removed and the book was full of humour. Also the story has been completely divorced from the city of pleasure. As filmed, it might have occurred anywhere; thus the city of pleasure has no raison d'être and seems ridiculous. This show depressed me. You may have seen in the papers that I was the star at the celebration of 10 years of Playfair's management at the Lyric on Sunday night. I truly was. Funny. I wasn't a bit nervous about singing, though it was my first appearance on any stage! All I know about ultra-violets is that we have vita glass in most of the south windows here. What are the results of having vita glass,—who can measure? I can't. I spent 3 hours at the Savoy Grill on Thursday arguing with "the great English producer," Hitchcock, about my second film-story. He wanted to alter it; but I wouldn't agree; and I won't. Thorpe, the manager of British International Picts., took my side. At the end I was very hoarse. I spent the whole of Friday here, and the whole of Saturday at Elstree, revising the titles of "Piccadilly." They would have been terrible—for the people had altered back a lot of titles already revised by me—if I had not been firm. I got my way over every title. I'm going to the performance tomorrow. I didn't want to go; but there was such a fiendish outcry at Elstree when I said I shouldn't go, that I gave in.

Your still-hoarse uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 5.2.29.

I know nothing of Imperial Tobacco. I know something of Margarine Union, for less than 6 months ago I bought some at 32s. 6d. and they are now over 80s. I don't suppose Castlerosse really did sleep through "Piccadilly." But afternoon performances of "Piccadilly" were very badly arranged, owing to a too long and totally footling programme in front of it. The film is certainly a success. How great I have not yet learnt. The press on the whole is enthusiastic. But some critics are quite incapable of seeing the aim of the story, or the shape of it, or the building up of it; and because the titles are all absolutely life like and colloquial, they called the titles "incredibly naïve." On the other hand a few critics have grasped my intentions very well indeed. I saw the film again on the opening night and was extremely well satisfied with it. It is bound to arouse a lot of jealousy in film circles and press circles. The "Sunday Dispatch" rang me up and asked to be allowed to come and see me. I refused, as I always do, such a request. They then slated the film from every possible aspect! I don't agree that the film, as now cut, is too slow at the beginning. All that gradualness is part of Dupont's architecture. Believe me, friends, he is a great man. We are going to Paris on Saturday for a few days. I don't quite know why, except that I needed some change. We shall be there only a few days. My demi-semi-cousin Allen Bennett is now in hospital (Barts) for some nervous disease, and I have to go and see him. I don't want to. *He* would never have come to see me in similar circs. I haven't seen him for 35 years at least. But I must go. Famille oblige.

Your well uncle.

Saw and heard a "talkie" last night. It was *AWFUL*.

Hotel Matignon, Paris. 13.2.29.

Thank you for yours received this cold morn. According to newspaper reports, it is far colder here than in London, and I can well believe these reports. About the cold the word

'intense' can safely be used. Last night we had dinner at a rather wild place and met various friends and acquaintances. We came here on Saturday; good journey; but the cold had not begun then. We went to a play the same night. Theatre packed: theatre dirty: theatre entirely unventilated. Happily, the play was good. But a play which lasts from 8.45 to midnight is 30 minutes too long for me. We haven't done much else except eat. To go forth into the streets is quite an adventure. Most of the girls run or at any rate scuttle, and there are public brasiers lighted in various places so that passers-by can warm themselves. I'm sure it isn't so cold as this in London. We leave tomorrow at 10 a.m. (D.V.) We give a trifling lunch today to Madame André Maurois and Jean Aubry. Maurois himself can't come as he is lecturing in Lyons. He said he was very sorry. I said that anybody who went to a place like Lyons deserved all the consequences thereof, however disastrous. He agreed. He is a very nice fellow—Jew. His name many years ago used to be Herzog or something like that. There are fewer people in Paris than usual: which is excellent. This hotel is decidedly good. Sympathique! And cheap. We have 2 bedrooms, 1 private bathroom, 1 cabinet de toilette for 22s. a day. The food laisse à désirer, mais naturellement on mange beaucoup dehors. I intend to hold on to my Margarines. They keep on rising and I see no reason why they should stop rising at present. They can't fall. Indeed margarine is a most pleasing commodity. It may even be pleasing to eat.

Your travelling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.2.29.

Referring to your water leakages, we have only had one trouble—freezing of bath waste down in basement. This was cured before our arrival last Thursday. I have been usually wearing *three* suits of underclothes. This dodge does me very well. We have come to the conclusion that we don't want to build a house so close to the King at Aldwick. So I have just sold the land which I bought for £1,100 for £1,400 free of agent's commission. This leaves quite a fair profit in less than

a year. However, my main triumph at the moment is that the Modigliani picture (over mantelpiece in hall) which I bought 10 years ago for £50 I sold yesterday for £1,000. I certainly had quite a sound instinct for Modiglianis. I ought to have trusted it more, for I could have bought 2 at the time instead of 1, equally good, at the same price each. Pity! I am not well and have not been. Disinclination to work, a sort of a chill in the head, and more acute insomnia. Yet quite well enough to go about. I am doing no work except articles. I don't know how long it will last. It's been lasting now about 3 weeks. The annoying thing is that everybody tells me how well I look! Melba has just come back to England and rung me up. I have put her off, as I don't at the moment feel equal to her. I have to take the chair at a Board meeting here in 20 minutes from this instant.

Your weakened uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 26.2.29.

It is quite easy to make money without earning it. I have just sold for £856 Mond Nickel shares which I bought for £150. But you have to think of these things, as I did, years in advance. On the other hand it is equally easy to lose money without intention. I saw Duophone shares drop from £4 odd to £1, and I said: "This is all right now; *must* be." And I bought 250. They immediately dropped to 5s. And so on. My belief now is that during the last 8 or 10 days I have had flu while mistaking it for a cold. I stayed in the house 4 days, and 1 day in bed. I thought I was better, but the neuralgic head pains, so characteristic as a sequela of flu, persist. Nevertheless, I wrote a short story and an article. I went to Barts. this afternoon to see our 33rd cousin Stephen Allen Bennett. He was much better of his disease and was allowed to walk in the quadrangle. I walked with him. He came in after a few turns, turned white, felt giddy, and had to be laid on the bed by a doctor and a nurse. I departed. They said it was only the effects of the cold air. I saw the expert specialist, Marley Fletcher, who assured me that the patient was going on splendidly. He is supposed to be going home to Burslem on Friday. And I

shall be relieved when he has gone. We have a party tonight, and I feel not equal to it. We have another on Friday, to which I hope I *shall* feel equal. I can send you some works of M. P. Shiel (to keep) if you like. I've just read "The Purple Cloud." I first read it about 20 years ago. It is still very good. God keep you both through the Grand National.

Your influenzed uncle.

At this time Harrods published in the Press three full-page advertisements containing ideas expressed by Bennett, Shaw and Wells. The origin of this stunt is explained in the following letter.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 5.3.29.

I am now very busy again. Especially today. But I am not yet cured of my malady. And I do not yet know exactly what the malady is. I was nearly cured on Saturday and Sunday, but yesterday the thing became malignant—in the guise of neuralgia. I am rather better today, once more. Still, I am working fairly well, and God reigns.

Harrods paid nothing for their unique stunt. This stunt was entirely my idea. Harrods' Sales Manager came to me and asked me to write an article about the firm. He then said that if I wanted to kick him out I could do so. I did not, but I refused to write the article. We talked on and on and as I liked the man I said that I would write him a letter of refusal, and that he could print it if he chose. He asked if he could print it large. I said he could print it as large as he liked. He suggested that the publication of the letter might do me harm. I said No. He said that just one letter would be too brief in its effect, and that to get the full effect he ought to continue it somehow. I suggested that he should try some other authors, including Wells and Shaw. He said he would. I said he would not succeed. He said that he did not think he would succeed. Harrods are tremendously pleased with the affair. They wanted to give me something. I refused. A box of cigars? No. I am sending four Shiel books. We had two parties last week. Both ended very late, and both were very noisy. Duff Cooper came in his Court suit, having arrived from a Speaker's dinner. Immense

success among the servants and others. You may believe me when I tell you that Lady Castlerosse is a great beauty. She had to be asked with Castlerosse, who is an extremely brainy fellow and an old friend. We saw the new Maugham play, and liked it. It is the best modern play I have seen since I saw one of my own. I do not know whether "Woodley" is a correct picture of a public school; but it is a rather convincing picture of something—except the housemaster, who to me is not convincing. I am sending you the book. Please return it.

Your rapid uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.3.29.

Grazia. I can tell you something about the Cochran Revue. I applied for 2 seats for the 1st night here, and the box person wrote and said the seats would be reserved for me, and that the price was £2. each. I told him I wouldn't have them. Some theatres *do* charge double for a first night—"The Circle of Chalk" does, Thursday night next (I refused to pay)—but £2 a stall seemed to me excessive. I doubt not that my letter will be shown to Carlos, himself. I am still considerably indisposed. As soon as I get into bed I have neuralgia. Lots of other people say that they have had the same thing—shooting neuralgia, coming and going with a periodicity of about 5 minutes, so I suppose I must have had flu, unbeknownst like! Anyhow this neuralgia has kept me awake till 4 a.m. 3 nights. It did last night. With the result that if any string is required in the house today, I can supply it, ready chewed. I expect you're right about the merits of the new revue. We were at Adelaide Phillpotts's new play last night. Original, subtle, sense of character; but not dramatic,—it won't run. I must write to the girl. Why do you have indigestion? *I* don't. Take a tonic, and eat a bit less, don't take any alcohol, get more exercise. I am still dreaming of going to Brighton for a few days of Harry. Freddy Lonsdale has asked me to read his new play. I've read 2 acts of it; *very* funny, and totally untrue. I don't know when it will be done. But it will be a success.

Your brave uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.3.29.

I went down to Brighton with Harry Preston on Friday, and returned on Sunday after a lively time indeed. The neuralgia is not quite gone, but nearly. A friend of a friend has lent us a house at Antibes, and for this reason we are supposed to be going there on Tuesday next. However, a further complication has now arisen. British International have decided to produce my second film (long since written for them) as a 'talkie'—without consulting me,—of course. I can't agree to this unless I write all the actual dialogue myself and control all the speechifying. And I shan't do this unless I am paid therefor. Nothing has yet been settled. Moreover they want to begin at once. All theatrical and filmy people are always in a terrific hurry unless they are in a state of coma. God knows what will happen, but I shall know more about it on Thursday (D.V.). The situation makes it rather difficult for me to concentrate on other work—of which I have lots to do if I am to maintain my schedule.

Your feverish uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 25.3.29.

We are leaving for Antibes tomorrow morning. Now that we are going away I think that my neuralgia, etc., is all cured. The thing that sticks out most clearly in my mind is that on Saturday afternoon at 6 o'clock I saw the whole Boat Race on the film. I thought that this was rather good. I did not go to see the Boat Race as I am getting very tired of these processions; but to see a "talkie," the "Canary Murder Case." It is a poor story, but the talking part of it shows an immense improvement on anything I have heard before. I went because there is a strong probability that my new film will be done as a talkie,—only there is a hitch at present between British International and myself, which may or may not be arranged today. I may say that if any one gives way it will be the B.I.P. Apparently the talkies are going to talk the silent off the stage. A quarter of the entire population of Glasgow saw "The Singing

Fool" in four weeks. At the Regal the "S.F." played recently to £6,000 a week, whereas the receipts immediately fell to £2,000 when silent films were done. However, I discount everything I hear, particularly as I have seen one talkie where the theatre was very far from full. True it was a bad talkie. Piccadilly Tube station is now about finished and it is not at all bad. Cambridge won. I drew two horses in a sweep in the Grand National, but both of them were negligent enough not to win. In other respects I have done no gambling for a long time. Cannes is only a few miles from Antibes. I am just off to the barber's. The B.I.P. manager and Dupont are coming to lunch.

Your indefatigable uncle, who wrote two articles and one short story last week.

P.S. This is a cable sent from New York when "Piccadilly" was first done in the private theatre of the American Distributors thereof: "Just viewed. Consensus of opinion of world-wide staff it is one of the finest pictures ever produced. Congratulations."

Antibes. 4.4.29.

The decision to come here was rather sudden. Henry Russell, the operatic impresario offered this villa for a period. We came. Fred and Atky came in the car. We will probably go back by car as we want to look for accommodation near Dinard for the summer. We are all right here. The house is large. We have engaged 2 other servants. Fred is devoted. But we are 2¾ miles from Antibes, and everything in the South of France is inefficiently done—especially trading. As a fact, it takes one car, and part of Russell's car, to keep us in touch with Antibes. No rain here for 6 weeks. Lovely views: snow mountains to north, sea to south. By the way, Hy. Russell's wife, Lady Patricia, is only about 25; he is about my age, if not more. She is the daughter of the Earl of Dufferin, who had No. 75 for a long time, and she was born in my bedroom. This fact thrills

her. Strange. I mean the coincidence. As for films, the talkies are certainly in the main a very great, even startling, financial success. I saw the "Canary Murder Case," supposed to be good. It is amazing—but only as an elephant dancing a fox-trot would be amazing. I told Miss Nerney to go. She came back furious with disappointment. I sold the Austin for £80. If I could have sold it in 1928 I should have got £110. Also the Austin have brought out a new model which can be bought for about £140 net. But you know more about this than I do. You *do* have times. Fancy Beaumaris! I have had an offer of a special limited company to be formed to produce talkies based on my novels, *if* I will produce them myself. I have refused it. But I am going on the Board of the big new (Wembley) company with a capital of £1½ millions. I was invited to do so, and I thought I might do some good there. We have been dashing about a good bit, but keeping it dark. However, despite all precautions, I found the great tidings of my arrival in the "Continental Daily Mail." Pity! Maeterlinck called here yesterday, with wife. I saw them coming, but I hadn't a notion who he was so I hid till he was gone.

Your hiding uncle.

Dinard. 16.4.29.

We haven't had an address since Wednesday night last. Since Thursday morning when we left Antibes, we've been averaging 200 m.p. day, in addition to seeing sights. Arles, Albi, Angoulême and Angers—all beginning with A, and all fine—were the sleeping places. We got here last eventide. The South of France is superlative scenery, hairpin bends, and good roads. The more north-west part is more English, but with straight roads, chiefly bad. Yesterday from Angers to Rennes we maintained the magnificent average of 17 m.p.h. From Rennes onwards a good road, and average about 33. 45 is about all I desire, but sometimes we go to 50. We got lost several times. We went over from Antibes to Cap Ferrat to see Somerset Maugham in his Moorish house last Wednesday. A car stopped suddenly in front of us and we burst up its tank and spilled

every drop of its petrol. Delay. Constatation de la police. Etc, etc. However we got to Maugham's for a late tea, and as the car hadn't returned from Menton, whither it had kindly taken 2 Germans who were the hirers of the car which we disabled, we stayed for dinner, and got home at 11.20. W.S.M. is very well fixed, with a marvellous garden, and white-clad efficient, silent male servants. We enjoyed this visit. My health was never good at Antibes: East wind and mistral all the time but no rain. We had our 1st rain for 16 days at Arles. Yesterday it rained nearly all day. Today is beautiful. Dinard is very ugly, with fine views over St. Malo, etc. obstructed by terrible architecture. We shall seek for summer, some smaller place near-to. There are several. At Monte Carlo we foregathered with Lili d'Alvarez and saw her play tennis in the tournament; and she had lunch with us, much to the annoyance of the mandarin-organiser of the tournament, whom she threw over to join us. Of course she is a big star, and she behaves like one—but not to us. Certainly not. She is a nice girl and a lovely player. She was only playing an exhibition match: mixed doubles. She won, but not easily. We shall leave here about Thursday and reach London Sunday. I'm glad you have a garden and are cherishing it. Believe me, my innocent boy, that spring-cleaning is a necessary and an unavoidable phenomenon.

Your resting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 22.4.29.

Yours of 15th, for which thanksgivings, reached my hands on Saturday night, when we returned home, punctual to the minute. I'm afraid that this means that by going round the world, I've lost a week with you. Pity! I may tell you that the production of "Judith" is not yet a certainty, despite all newspaper talk. It probably *will* be produced, but only towards the end of the season. No dates are yet even semi-fixed. I have just corrected the proofs of the 'book of the words' of "Judith." Although the libretto is in prose the publishers, having evidently thought to themselves that all operatic libretti are and must be in verse, have arranged the prose as free verse, with the most wildly comic effects. So they will just have to have it all altered.

We motored 1,185 miles: Antibes to Dieppe, average 170 per day. Quite enough for me, especially with sight-seeing thrown in. The car ran magnificently. There is no doubt about this car. We stayed at Dieppe the last night. It was a perfect day, with every prospect of a perfect Saturday. But on Saturday morn, the sea was all white horses—created by a strong N.E. wind. Qualms. The Newhaven boats are not to be compared with the Dover boats for internal comfort. But they are good seaboats and they get a move on. Everything was all right. Fred, ten days earlier, coming home by train, had a wait of 8½ hours in the middle of nowhere in the South of France, owing to the derailment of 2 trucks. And at Boulogne they tried to turn him out of the train into a hotel! But he wouldn't. He arrived at Victoria only 22 hours late—and, I imagine, a bit cross. We've taken rooms for August at a hotel with private beach at St. Kast about 15 miles south of Dinard. Dinard itself is no good. I worked all day yesterday at correspondence 10—8, with a bit more after 10 p.m. but I cleared it up.

Your prodigal uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 30.4.29.

I am now really busy. In 8 days I have written 3 articles and over 7,000 words of a long-short story (20,000 words it is to be). Also the charming and distinguished Swedish cook has left us. (They are always moving, these Swedes.) Pauline Smith came yesterday. She's been 6 months in Italy and ill nearly all the time. We went to the opera last night. Were a shade late owing to traffic. I left after the 2nd act, as I wasn't going to have my today's work imperilled. I think I shall write an article about the opera. Is there any important news? I don't think so. I am having endless delays and troubles with my 2nd film, "Punch and Judy." On the other hand the "Daily Telegraph," of all papers, has bought a rich chunk of my "Journal," which it means to publish as a sensational serial—sort of. The D.T. wants to boom itself soon, and this will be one of its stunts. People do have strange ideas. I was glad to

see that the MS of one of my perfectly ordinary short stories fetched £40 in a sale room the other day.

I wrote the above at 7.30 before post came. I was "getting forward." Thanks for your letter. I. C. I. House is very ugly, I think. I am to be shown over it. What interests me more is the news of your garden. I regard this as a great scheme.

Your respectful uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 7.5.29.

Well, you can get yourself a new fountain pen and have it engraved and I will pay for it. In my vast experience, there is only one—Waterman. People are often giving me fountain pens; but they are not very good. The "Readers Library" "Piccadilly" *is* the 1st edition. But I think it consists of 50,000 copies or 100,000. Your father might write to Foyle, Charing X Road and send a short list of his best first editions and ask for separate prices. Of course no one can expect a bookseller to buy at anything like a price he sells at. But I know a bookseller who himself gave £50 for a 1st "O. W. Tale" about a month ago. Early Shaws, and George Moores are valuable. *Really* early Shaws are worth quite a lot of money: "Widowers Houses," "Perfect Wagnerite," and the early novels, etc. Complete collections of any collected author will fetch more than their separate items sold singly. I sell lots of books (I mean hundreds a year) to Foyle; but no rare ones. Indeed I have few rare books—about 100 perhaps. We've had a party or two. There is one here tonight. Opera once; but not again. The strain and discomforts are 2 great. I'm going to write an article about it for "The Realist." ("The Realist" is good.) The "Statesman". libel action will cost us £3,000, of which I shall have to find one third. This is not funny, and I don't *really* enjoy it,—say what you will.

Your forking-out uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 7.45 a.m. 13.5.29.

As heaven doesn't know how I shall be fixed tomorrow, I am writing most of my epistle to you today. I shall try to finish my long-short story tomorrow; but it is by no means certain; and also I have got mixed up with Sam Goldwyn, to see whom again we went over to Robert Loraine's at Roehampton yesterday afternoon. I don't think anything will come of the particular business that he suggested (with enthusiasm), but something else might. Anyhow he is going to have a special performance at 11.45 tomorrow night of "Bulldog Drummond" at the Tivoli for me. As we have a dinner party that night, it means that we shall have to take with us any guests who want to go. I regret to say that people rarely leave our parties till midnight. Goldwyn seems a very nice chap. I only met him once before. His wife too seems a very nice chap; she was an actress, and also a movie star till he pulled her out of it—3 years ago. They both assert that they have never had the slightest tiff or dispute of any kind. They seem honest. Your friend C. B. Cochran has now got two failures at once: "Porgy" and "Paris Bound." But I hear that "Wake Up and Dream" is a very great success. I am doing a very great deal of work.

Tuesday, 8.30 a.m.

Thanks for yours just received. No, I don't think the pens I receive are good enough for you to receive as gifts from me. So you had better buy one. I think my opera article will appear in the July no. of "The Realist." I have been kicking up some row there with the "business board" of the paper about the commercial side of the affair. Conway Davies, the chairman of the company, objected to my interference, as I am 'only' on the editorial board. However, I have subjugated Conway Davies; the policy advocated by me has been accepted, and C. D. is coming to eat out of my hand at the Ritz Grill tomorrow. I am not following the elections—yet. Dinner tonight. Lunch today. All important. More important, I still hope to finish my long-short story today.

Your advancing uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 21.5.29.

Thanks for letter received at 1.15 today when we got home from week-end at Galsworthy's at Bury, near Amberley. On the way home we went round to Sussex Gardens, Regent's Park, to inspect a house to let (the lease of this wigwam is up at the end of next year). In brief, it was N. G. We had a great time at J. G.'s, everybody being fine. "Everybody" was J. G. and Ada and a nephew artist, name Sauter, complete with wife, and Hugh Walpole who was week-ending also. J. G. goes out riding at 7.45 each morn. He seems to play tennis and croquet and answer letters most of the day. He must write books occasionally, I suppose. We didn't stir from the garden at all in 3 days. As the 1st edition of "Piccadilly" consisted of 50,000 copies it is never likely to be worth more than about 6d. I now see booksellers advertising everywhere for "O. W. Tale" 1st for £20. They *sell* it for £50. I signed a copy the other day for which the owner paid £50, and it was not a "fine copy." In getting a Waterman you have got the best. And the best thing you can give the aged uncle is a necktie with hkf to match. And J. G. looks old enough to be the aged uncle's father. And is in fact 3 months younger than the a.u. But J. G. can beat him at both tennis and croquet. The traffic today did not prevent us from coming up in 1 h 50 m. Distance about 50 miles. Yesterday the traffic was terrific. We could see it from the garden. The road looked like one long motor bus. J. G. has five gardeners and 10,000,000 blossoms, 3 dogs, 3 cats, 2 horses and some really very fine sherry. I had too much to drink on Saturday night. But that learned me. The E. wind yesterday did me harm. The nephew did a portrait of Walpole on Monday morning, and of me in the afternoon. We have come back to the usual terrific rush.

Your reformed uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 28.5.29.

I am *tremendously* rushed this week. Yesterday I saw 2 doctors, and a 3rd doctor in order to be vaccinated. I am not ill, but well; only my insomnia is now being taken in hand. Whether

anything will ensue I know not. The vaccination is for travelling. We leave on June 30th. We are engaged every blooming night this week, and we have a big At home tomorrow night, which will probably last till 2 a.m. Some '80-odd' people. Thursday night: Selfridge's Roof for the election. Friday 'Realist' Dinner. Tonight Laverys. Last night 'Don Giovanni.' I did no work yesterday on account of doctors. I hope to do some today.

Your flying uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 4.6.29.

Excuse typewriting. But between a vaccination pain in the arm and a crick in the back of the neck due to a draught at the Ritz on Saturday at lunch, I find it rather difficult to sleep in any sort of excellence, and so I have arisen late. The doctor has told me that I ought not to eat spinach—me who have been regarding spinach as the staff of life for many years past. The three doctors were not employed for vaccination, only one, and it was done in about a minute. That was eight days ago. The other two are for a general overhaul, with a view to improving sleeping. Both of them have advised me to take a drug called 'medinal' every night for at least four months. Both say that it is absolutely harmless and so far as I can judge, it is. When all the doctors have been financially satisfied I will not tell you the total of their demands. It might shock you. It will certainly shock me.

Our party of over 90 people is understood to have been a very great success. We did nothing ourselves. Everything was done by a first-rate firm. Tania, Kathleen Long, and Sheridan Russell all played admirably. We also had a dance band (Harrods) consisting of piano (1) and drum (1). I solemnly instructed them to play pianissimo and they did. I had a bit of a chat with them at 2 a.m. "Do you do this sort of thing every night?" I asked. "*Every* night," said they. "And when do you go to bed?" said I. "As soon as we have finished," said they. It was a good thing there was not a sudden fire in the house. If there had been, and the exit had been foozled,

English literature would have been in a sad state and every newspaper in the land would have had a first-class front-page item of news. But our party was simply naught compared with the election party of Gordon Selfridge on Thursday night. There must have been about 2,000 people at that show. There was plenty of room for them, plenty of loud speakers, two bands and as much Cordon Rouge as the entire 2,000 could drink, besides solid sit-down suppers for all who wanted it. I wanted it. The whole affair was magnificently organised. I reached home before one. I was quite well after it.

We are going away on the 30th June, and do not expect to be back before the 28th August. During half of this time I shall be at work as usual. During the other half I shall probably keep a Journal, which will be sold for the benefit of the doctors. A man who is writing a bibliography of my works came to see me on Saturday, and told me all sorts of interesting things that I did not know about my own books. He predicts very high prices for all the early first editions. He cannot get a copy of the first edition of "The Old Wives' Tale" at less than £80, and so has not bought it. I have no copy. But your father has. That collection will be worth quite a good deal in due course. I have been putting together all my principal first editions (of other authors) with a view to selling them and buying Ecuadorian Corporation ordinary shares, as to which I have received a private tip from one of the directors.

The Reform Club is a bit unelated about the election, but is bearing up nobly, as of course it would. The Club is full of political talk at the moment, and I am getting rather tired of it.

Did you read my article in the Staffs *Sentinel*? It appeared also in the Derby *Telegraph* and the Newcastle *Evening World*, which all belong to Rothermere. It has annoyed a lot of people, for which I am honestly glad. Others are very pleased with it. It is of the sort known as 'trenchant.' This is about all, although there is lots more.

Your drugged uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 11.6.29.

It means a lot of pre work and complicated organisation for me satisfactorily to leave this country for 2 months on end. I am really very busy indeed. It was one of the directors, Felix Rose, a friend of mine of the Ecuadorian Corporation who took me aside the other day and said: "Buy. You will not regret it." I bought 1,000 shares at 14s. 3d. He said: "Buy them and forget them, and you will see." If you have to choose between Levers and I.C.I. caeteris paribus, I should choose *London*—IF you feel equal to London. You must remember that your father didn't —at about your age. He preferred to go back to the provinces, and from his point of view he was right. If you come to London you will have an immense amount to learn—unless you stick in a rut. We had a party last night: Galsworthies, Coward, Maclagans, Eileen Power, and Geoffrey Scott. The mischief with them is that they stay too late. I didn't get into bed till 1 a.m. I stood next to an electric radiator with only 1 bar on, the other day for about a minute. I thought it felt hottish. But I noticed nothing. But next morning Fred came to me: "You've ruined your trousers, sir," he saith. I had. A hole through one leg! So I have had to order another suit, to my great regret. We go to a theatre tonight. Have to. Can't help it. My opera 1st night is on 25th. Can't help that either. We're supposed to leave here on Sunday June 30th. It is now 8.30 a.m.

Your matutinal uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 18.6.29.

I shall expect you to breakfast on Friday at 8.45. Also for lunch. Apparently you will have to be at I.C.I. House earlier than we thought. I am extremely busy, and I was up till nearly 2 o'clock this morning talking to Lynn Fontanne. Still, I am well. I have had out the biggest tooth that God ever created. It was a great bore at the time, but all is over. I am told that it is very improbable that you will be offered a post in London.

Your overpressed uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 25.6.29.

I am rather weary with the nervous strain of only two rehearsals of the opera. If I had been to more than two I do not know what would have been the result. All the people in the cast can sing, but none of them, not even the Swedish girl, can act. Also the traditions of Covent Garden are cast iron; the heads of the different departments dwell in deep grooves, listen to you politely and sympathetically, and do almost nothing. I have, however, succeeded in getting some changes in Judith's costume. As originally designed the poor thing had to vamp Holofernes in a nightie which might have been bought at Harrods. She will now at least look a bit indecent—at least I hope so. Why are you worrying about your possible appointment when worry is absolutely useless? You are as bad as me, if not worse, and you ought to be better.

Your hopeful uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 28.6.29.

At his request Leverhulme* was brought up to be introduced to me today at the Reform Club. He mentioned you. I said that you wanted a change. He said: "He wants a different kind of work?" I said: "What he wants is a higher salary." He said: "You think we are under-paying him?" I said: "Yes, I think you are." He said: "The matter shall be looked into." And so on. I don't suppose it will be, but I thought that if the I.C.I. came to nothing this might possibly help you with Levers. The opera went very well—much better than I expected. Of course the production was terribly old-fashioned. The gate money was a record for the house. We leave here on Sunday morning.

Your fleeing uncle.

*The Second Viscount.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 29.6.29.

I cannot imagine "Judith" on the wireless. I think that the music is very easy to understand when you hear it. Whether or not you like it when you understand it is a different matter. The thing was certainly a considerable success.

Your still departing uncle.

Garda, Italy. 10.7.29.

Just got cable with your glad news. Well, I wish you well. It will be a great commotion in your existence, and will do you good. I am going to Russia with Max about August 10th. There are complications about the passport, as I have mine here and couldn't get out of France without it. So I can't send it to London for the Russian visa. We have just got here, this afternoon. The hotel is bang on the eastern shore of Lake Garda, and near Verona. Wondrous scenery. It seems a very good place. Weather magnif. Heat terrif. But very pleasant. We stayed 3 nights at Maugham's at Cap Ferrat; and a picnic was given to us and 12 others on the Iles des Lérins, off Cannes. This picnic lasted from 10.30 a.m. till 4.15 a.m. It was lengthened 2 hours by a sudden violent storm which prevented us reaching the mainland after dinner till 2 a.m. Then we had to go to a night restaurant and eat and dance. Withal, it was the longest and finest picnic I ever took part in. No mishaps en route. But unpacking at night and packing next morning was a dashed nuisance. We shall be here at rest and till 17th. In great haste. The I.C.I. must be and hereby is very exciting. Your future will depend on *you.*

Your remote uncle.

Garda, Italy. 13.7.29.

Yes, sir, you can certainly use 75 during, at any rate, most of August. I shall sleep at 75 on the night of the 8th. On the 9th I am going to Russia with Beaverbrook and a party, till the

end of August. This has been sprung upon me. At first I refused it; but I accepted after I had refused. This Ermitaggio place is exceptionally fine. Lovely landscapes. Hot. Perfect bathing—at the front door. Excellent service. Excellent food. Inclusive pension terms 11s. 2d. per diem per caput! I think there is every chance for you at I.C.I. And if you don't ascend there, God may keep you, but I fear I shan't.

Your distant uncle.

The next letter was written from Fontainebleau, where A. B. lived for several years before the War. Many of his earlier books were written here and his ideas for these books were "collected" during walks through the Forest.

Savoy Hotel, Fontainebleau. 24.7.29.

On Saturday we shall be at St. Cast. Like the rest of the world we have had rainless heat, but there was a thunderstorm with rain at 2–3 a.m. this morn. A bit cooler. But not much. Heat suits me. You live in a continuous perspiration which continuously carries off toxins and you can drink as much as you like. We saw Rolls Peters, the American star, off at Melun, yesterday, and are resting today as above. We had 5 continuous days of touring, and this is quite as much as I want at a time. Tomorrow we go to Chartres en route for St. Cast. On the big roads you can average 35 m.p.h. after allowing for slows through towns and villages. Personally I have no desire to exceed 50 m.p.h. The big roads are very good, and they are straight. Atkinson loves them. Some side and secondary roads are very trying. Lake Garda was a great success. So was crossing the Alps. You rise to 8,000 feet, I think. There are some gradients of 1 in 7. But the hairpins are 'liberally' designed, and really it is nothing to motor over the Alps—in summer. Of course in winter you just can't do it. Even the other day there were remains of snow on peaks just above us. At the frontier an Italian official came up to me and said: "I think you are Mr. A.B., the adjectival author, etc., etc." So I shook his manly

hand. But how he knew me I know not; as all information is designedly concealed on my passport, on which I am Enoch, etc. This is all for the moment. We suppose that you are in the throes of arranging to depart. It must be a sort of earthquake.

Your perspiring uncle.

St. Cast. 1.8.29.

Just to keep in touch. By this time you will have received my curt blessing. I expect to sleep at 75 on the 8th and 9th but I shall not be at home on the evening of the 8th, though I expect to be at home for lunch on the 8th. What else will happen to me before I leave London on the 10th I know not. The weather is bad here. When I got up at 6.30 this morn the sun was very bright indeed, but at the same time a drenching rain was falling. I have never cared for the Breton climate, and I doubt if I ever shall. This hotel is not so bad; but we have difficulty in getting our breakfasts punctually. However, as E.V. Lucas once said: "I always try to leave a hotel better than I found it." Health excellent.

Your calm uncle.

Picture Postcard of R.*M.S.P.* "*Arcadian.*" 12.8.29.

Tu peux voir que le bateau est passablement vieux. But she is good. Smooth sea. We reach Oslo tomorrow, Tuesday morning. Everything is going on all right. Swimming bath on board. Fine.

A. B.

R.*M.S.P.* "*Arcadian.*" 15.8.29.

We are now 2-3rds of the way from Oslo to Danzig, where we shall arrive at 8 a.m. tomorrow. Russia, on Sunday. Oslo, where we spent Tuesday, is not much of a place. It is the

sailing I like. Ship steady the whole of the voyage so far. 500 passengers, mostly very mediocre indeed. They had a grand "get-together" dinner and dance (paper caps) last night. Toy instruments. Desolating jollity. Need I say that we took no part in it whatever? Much too high and mighty. But there are either 5 or 6 other persons named Bennett in the ship. I regret to inform you that our party plays baccarat every night in the private sitting room. I have lost only 18/- in 4 nights. It is a tedious game, but I feel I must play the game—not that game, but *the* game, I mean. I can work like anything in my large double cabin. The Lord Max has shoved Mrs. Norton and Lady Louis Mountbatten into one cabin the same size as mine. It is just like his naughtiness. Considering that each of them has a maid, and about 100 frocks, they are a bit crowded. But they stick it. Venetia Montague has a cabin like mine. There is now afoot a great tournament of deck-sports, all of them utterly infantile, and nearly all the passengers take them very seriously. I never saw such a spectacle of simple-mindedness. The ship is good. Her swimming bath is good. Food quite good; but daily Venetia orders the meals specially. I am very busy; but have time to hope that your Ealing wigwam is growing in grace.

Your marine-again uncle.

R.M.S.P. "Arcadian," Stockholm. 23.8.29.

We had a terrific time in Russia. It is about the most interesting thing I ever beheld. But as I am writing articles about it I don't propose to write letters about it. We reached Stockholm at 8 a.m. this day. It is a brilliant place, and very different from Oslo. On landing this morning I was accosted by a lady interviewer complete with camera-man. I refused the interview and gave the sitting. On returning this afternoon I was accosted by a gent interviewer complete etc. and the same thing happened. Beaverbrook told another interviewer that he was me; but the farce didn't work. We leave here at 1 a.m. and pass 2 calm days at sea to Copenhagen. The ship has not once rocked since we started. I shall be home on the 31st.

Your expectant uncle.

R.M.S.P. "Arcadian." 28.8.29.

We are now at Hamburg. It is possible that we shall go to Berlin for tonight and return tomorrow morning. Max has been poisoned by some food or other, but is recovering. Stockholm is an A1. place. I have finished all my articles on the cruise. At Copenhagen I was interviewed 3 times, photographed 4 times and caricatured once, in a day. And simply couldn't help it.

Your watchful uncle.

Savoy Hotel, London. 15.9.29.

I am now staying here. I am collecting hotel-material for my novel, and *I* never had such material. I hope the novel will be equal to the material. Hard work collecting it; but everything is open to me and everybody at my disposition. I visited the laundry the other day (250 employees). The head of it is a Scotch chemical engineer! All about hard and soft water, surface tensions etc. etc. I learnt a lot. We were invited to the première of "The Flying Fool" last night. As a "thriller" it is worth seeing, I think. But I never saw a thriller before, so I'm not much of a judge. Of course it was awful. I'm very tired today. Up late. Tomorrow Monday I shall be downstairs at 6 a.m. to see how the hotel "wakes up." Then I interview Miss Nerney at 11, the hotel detective, a great character, at 12, Richmond Temple the publicity manager at lunch, the manager of the grill-room at tea, and so on. By Sunday next I reckon I shall know more about hotels de luxe than any other layman. At least I hope I shall. So no more at present from your fully occupied uncle.

Savoy Hotel, London. 23.9.29.

I mean myself to return home tomorrow; but I am not sure whether I shall be able to. I expect I shall, though. The staying here is very satisfactory. Not only do they give me rooms for nothing; but they take 25 % off all the food charges. So that I

am paying not more than a third of the usual costs. The trouble is that my time is not yet my own. Nevertheless I am getting on with the preliminary of the novel. I have collected all the material. It is a bookful. Stiff with fanciful details. As that a Marconi page-boy calls at the hotel for marconigrams for despatch (nothing to do with the delivery of Marconigrams *to* the hotel) every 5 minutes throughout the day. I passed by your palace this morning at 10.15. I was at the 1st night of the Shaw play and on the whole enjoyed it. I sleep ill every night. When Atkinson has come back from his holiday I shall run over one night and see you two. Perhaps Saturday. You might send me a sketch plan showing the situation of the street. I've quite forgotten its name, and so have to send this to 75.

Your exhaustless uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 22.10.29.

I am doing this epistle in bed, being determined to take at least ½ a day's repose, after much hard labour, especially as we shall be up very late tonight, at a supper given by Mrs. Courtauld for Artur Schnabel. We were at the Savoy 1st night last night. The chorus was marvellous, and the whole show good, but I cared not for Ricketts's scenery. I resisted offers of supper and came home. Before that I went to a pre-first-night-of-"Canaries-Sometimes-Sing" dinner given by F. Lonsdale at the Garrick Club. Why authors should do this kind of thing I cannot imagine. About 40 people, including many toffs. Frederick was a bit shirty because I wasn't going to *his* 1st night, for which he had offered me seats. But when I explained to him that I was bound and gagged to the Savoy, he perceived my situation justly. I know naught of the Motor-show; haven't read one article on it, and shan't, I think. Why should I? After all a m.c. is only a mechanical contrivance for changing place. By the end of this month I shall have written ¼ of my long novel. I've already written 1/5th. Not bad, considering I only began it on Sept. 26th. The new Savoy Theatre is quite as good as it was described by me in the "D. Mail" yesterday.

Your embedded uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 29.10.29.

I've been far too busy with my own work, and have had a number of extraneous matters on my bowed shoulders. One night I saw Rich Hayes, the juggler, at the Palladium. He is still the finest juggler I ever did see, and quite in the classical tradition. I always see him when I can, and he always gives me intense pleasure. But the band at the Palladium must be the most deafening phenomenon in the world. I was in the 2nd row, and it was like being in an earthquake. I have also seen "Canaries Sometimes Sing." Two acts are magnif. light comedy. The 3rd is less magnif. I have to go to Chekhov tomorrow and the Lyric Ham'th first night on Thursday. And these will be more than enough for me for one week! Tomorrow I shall have written a quarter of my novel. 200 MS pages in 35 days. Some going! But it may be rotten. I thought that the Courtauld concert was superb. We stayed at the Courtaulds that night till 12.15. The next morning Sam Courtauld was leaving at 8 a.m. for New York. I have never been able to understand why they do plays at Coliseums. I think they are absolutely appalling. I am just going to ascend. 11 p.m.

Your sleepy uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. *Typewritten.* 4.11.29.

I am now in a most acute state of busy-ness. Last night we had supper at Professor William Rothenstein's (head of the Royal College of Art). It is a very interesting house, where the only tobacco offered is Gold Flake in the form of cigarettes, and where thousands of young girl art students appear after the meal. Also poets. I met a poet who sells his poems in single sheets from door to door at 6d. a piece. He seemed to me to be a very nice fellow and specimens of his wares which he showed me were rather good. We had a dinner party on Friday, of which the chief ornaments were Lady Diana and A. P. Herbert. Another ornament was Rudolf Kommer, but probably you neither know him nor know of him. I have a double engagement tonight, out. So it goes on. We are now getting

anxious about our next home. It will not be this house, as I have been unable to come to terms with the landlord. Of course I have the house for another year; but a year in the realm of estate agents is but two months in the sight of the Lord.

Your energetic uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 12.11.29.

About Friday night next. There is a good Hamilton Harty concert. I am telephoning you shortly to ask you both to dine here at 6.50 or so, and go to the concert afterwards. I shan't have your answer until I've finished this letter. Friday next is the first evening I shall have had since I saw you which has been free on which there was anything goodish to see or hear. We went to the V.C. performance of "Journey's End" on Sunday night. I was seeing the play for the first time! I think it is a very good play indeed, and in several rôles jolly well acted. Colin Clive is great. The prevalence of V.C.s all over the theatre was most impressive. This decoration has more prestige than all other decorations and orders put together. The wearers seemed to be a very decent, chiefly lower-middle-class, lot. Some of them old. I don't see quite why the V.C. should have such prestige among people (including me). I don't think that physical courage is a very rare quality. Still, there you are. Mr. Tayler is at last back. I dine with him to-morrow night. God knows what I've done in the last 7 days. I've forgotten. I've done pretty well everything—except sleep. I've even slept sometimes; my health is *very* good.

Your breakfasting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 19.11.29.

"The Matriarch" play is nothing; but Mrs. Pat Campbell is fine in it. "Bitter Sweet" I regard as exceedingly poor. Story sentimental and feeble; last act totally undramatic; music rotten; and jocularities 10th rate. The second act will just pass. I am not going to any more concerts till next week, when I *have*

to attend one, at 5.30 of the clock. I shall only stay for 45 minutes as we *have* to attend the first night of "Tunnel Trench." And after that I shall *have* to appear at a musical party given by Curtis Brown, who is one of my literary agents. And I am supposed to be writing a novel! I have now written over a third of it—that's something. I wrote a complete short story yesterday afternoon, and had an appointment which lasted 55 minutes, too. We had people to dinner which lasted till 12.30 a.m. I fear there is no news about people whom you know. Despite imperfect sleeping, my health is excellent. I certainly need less sleep than I did even a year ago. Age! Age hath its compensations. If I knew Harty's size I would send him a dozen collars, with an expression of thanks for his exertions. I'm lunching with 3 members of the top-staff of the Savoy today. I want a bit more Savoy atmosphere. I've just done a long chapter which I think is unique in the annals of the fictive art: namely, a full narrative of a general meeting of shareholders. But I am by no means sure that it is interesting. I got all the points in much detail from Beaverbrook, who is a great authority on the chicane of these affairs, and has presided at many general meetings. Dining with Gertrude Jennings tonight. Her brother, who does the excellent leaders in the "Daily Mirror," and for some reason signs them "M.W.," lives with her, or she with him, and is a great book-collector. When I see his collection I feel that I have *no* books.

Your reposing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 26.11.29.

Though busy, I have not really been getting on with my novel. Doing oddments, and preparing my mind. But I've corrected the first 53,000 words. Some job. Not *bad* stuff, I think, but I won't answer for it. However it will go ahead this week. As we came out of the Duchess Theatre the excellent Selfridge came up to me and said without introductory remarks that if I would write a play he would finance it. He had heard that the big-shop theme interested me. I lost my umbrella yesterday! It may return. Fortunately I have 2.

It appears that "Milestones" *may* be revived at Xmas. I am giving it a miss, having explained to about 10 persons concerned that I am writing a book, which is far more important to me than 40 revivals of "Milestones."

Your firm uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 3.12.29.

I am at the moment rather keen on going to Fez, when my book is done (which it isn't). There are good Dutch boats direct from Southampton to Tangier. This seems to me to be ideal: voyage 3½ days. Excellent roads and hotels. However, work, work! What do you mean about "In Quest of the Sun"? Have I ever heard of the book? True, I have no memory. Oh. Je me rappelle. No thanks. Because I know that I don't want a travel book, of any kind. I want lots of things, but I can never remember what they are except at the moment I want them extremely. I had the "Realist" editors, Archibald Church and Gerald Heard, to dinner on Friday night. They are devils of fellows, both of them. They know so much. Still, they *did* say it was me who had saved (temporarily) the "Realist" situation by a few well chosen words and a letter in the right quarter. That is the sort of thing that they themselves can't do, with all their enviable knowledge. I can't judge "The Realist," as I never read it except in bits. No time! The "Current Events" is done by the editors. When I have read it I have found this comment-stuff very good. I should say that considerably more than ½ the contents *are* good. I should also respectfully doubt whether your range of critical judgment is yet quite wide enough. But I know not, and do not wish to dogmatise. I have been out a lot, in fact every night. Doran lunched with me here on Sabbath, and I dined with him last night at the Savoy. But I was unfortunately so absorbed in my novel that I was of little use socially. I told him so. That was all right. He is a tactful man. "House of Commons?" Yes, my God. I went in there one night some time since. It was incredible. But credo quia impossibile. I am even busier than I was last week.

Your creative uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 10.12.29.

I am glad about your long holiday. I shall have no holiday at all. I am very much employed on my novel, and not at all cheerful about it. It does not seem to me to be as good as it ought to be. But it will soon be half done. I spent a very uncheery day yesterday reflecting upon the same. I seem to have spent Thursday, Friday and Saturday writing articles. This was rather a good thing as it enabled me to get away from the novel and to view it in perspective yesterday. On Sunday we went down to Lucas's for lunch. All was very agreeable there. His farmhouse is about 55 miles from London and about 10 miles from anywhere. Cocktails and champagne for lunch. And at night we were entertained at dinner at the Savoy by Richard Collet (manager of the Savoy Theatre), and I drank moselle and claret. And I was very well indeed yesterday morning. Indeed my health is just about first-rate. It is a mysterious world. I shall give 2s. 5d. to the Stoke-on-Trent Amateur Operatic Society's Fund for killing bad sopranos when the novel is finished. The only other news is that on Friday morning I went to bed at 2.30 after the Keeble dinner and the supper party at the Hutchinsons' following it; and worked the next day to the extent ot one complete article for the "Daily Express," about Manchester.

Your surlyish uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 16.12.29.

10 p.m. Exhausted with toil. We shall have our Xmas dinner at the Savoy. We can't have 2 meals here on Xmas Day. One will suffice for the staff! We were to have dined at Ethel Sands' tonight, but Ethel has been struck down into bed with laryngitis, and the dinner is off, to my great regret. Mr. Doran came here for a farewell tea today. He leaves the morn. I have finished my "Journal for 1929" for the "Daily Telegraph." I think it will make piquant reading, but the D.T. may not like it. You never know. However, they have bought it in the dark and must like it or lump it. Friday: if I can get seats for "The School for Scandal" at the Kingsway we shall go there. I hear it is

A.1. I'll let you know the arrangements. I have had 3 consecutive evenings 'in.' Unheard of!

Your powerful uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 23.12.29.

Exactly 1,000,000 parcels have come into this house during the last few days, but I have no memory of a parcel or parcels from you. Fred says you saw Miss Nerney. She isn't here yet. Anyhow we are greatly and vastly obliged to you both. A bit trying about the scarlatina. Your father and I once had scarlet fever together, about 50 years ago. He was ill, but I wasn't. I had to stay in bedroom but I got up every day and did drawings—I suppose there is no difference between scarlatina and scarlet fever. I am already getting a bit tired of Xmas. It takes me so long to keep level with my mail that I can't begin my work till heaven knows what time. However, I did a lot of work yesterday and Saturday. The weather, however, suits me not. We were invited to dinner last night, at the Park Lane Hotel. The Ritz Hotel sent me some pâté de foie gras yesterday. This means pâté de foie gras at every meal as the stuff won't keep. Auntie Tertia came on Friday with whole suitcases full of presents and Xmas pudding and mince-tarts and cheese-cakes. These mince-tarts are unsurpassed in my experience—indeed unequalled. This means mince-tarts at every meal. I can only get along by eating no meat, especially as I have had a lot of oatcakes given me: which monopolise my breakfasts. I *adore* oatcakes: yet was I glad to have eaten the last one this morning! We're going down to Beaverbrook's for next week-end. I couldn't easily get out of it. 2½ days change will not harm us. Our consumptive 2nd housemaid has *not* got consumption. But yesterday afternoon, being in charge, she showed a man straight into my study, when I was hard at work, without even enquiring his name. It was Geoffrey Russell; but it might have been an assassin. And anyhow it ruined my work. Well, we call down God's blessings upon you, with thanks and wish you a good journey tomorrow and no scarlet fever.

Your greedy uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 24.12.29.

Many thanks for the gifts, qui sont épatants. Surtout le muffler. The last muffler you gave me I still use more than any other; but it is getting a bit worn. Merry Xmas to all.

Your corresponding uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 31.12.29.

On Saturday night, at Beaverbrook's Cherkley, I had the best night I have had probably for 20 years at least—namely over seven hours. But at Cherkley on Sunday night, I had a very bad night. Ditto last night here. Incidentally we heard the inside of the Empire Crusade. There is no doubt that Max is very earnest and very vigorous about it. He seems to live for nothing else. He says he has already spent £30,000 on it, and will have spent £100,000 on it by the end of 1930. Anyhow that's something. Tonight, New Year's Eve dinner at the Savoy, as guests of Reeves-Smith. I shouldn't go, as I am acutely tired and neuralgic: but I need the stuff for a large chapter in my novel. Love and H.N.Y.

Your waked uncle.

1930—1931

"Milestones"

Schnabel

Diana Cooper's House

The Duke of Marlborough

Chiltern Court

"Don Juan"

Sleep

Josiah Stamp

Toscanini and Elgar

"Imperial Palace" Completed

Cornwall

A. E. W. Mason's Yacht

Free Trade and Unemployment

Henry Ford

Removal

The People's Theatre

Presents

Paris

A. B.'s Last Letter

75 Cadogan Square. 6.1.29.
(I put 29, because you did).

I am too busy to write you today, and yet I must. "Milestones" rehearsals, preparations, and general hades are going on much better than my novel is going on. But I have written various articles (which are infinitely easier than the easiest novel). I have to go to a reception at the Savoy for Elena Sullivan's (second) wedding at 4 this afternoon. First night of "Pirates of Penzance" tonight (royal box, which I don't want). And then a supper given by the management of the theatre afterwards. It almost makes me call upon the holy name of Our Saviour. I hope to resume my novel, but I am not sure that I shall. Anyhow I shall think about it. There is a servant difficulty in this abode, but it is being well handled. I have just learnt that the kitchen-maid (Atkinson's niece) can neither read nor write. The cook writes her letters for her to her mother! This is a fact. She is a nice girl, and she cleans very well and she keeps the hot water always marvellously hot. Otherwise she is no good. We lost the upper-housemaid last Monday. At least she was requested to depart at once, and she did. And so on. The 2nd housemaid is no flyer either. The cook is not a good cook; but she has brains and can be handled. I handle her. Fred continues to be the main pillar of the Temple. Look here, I must shut up. I haven't another moment. I've been dealing with my mail for 2½ hours. This is the last of it.

Your hasting uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. *Typewritten.* 21.1.30.

The busy-ness of this house is now even intensified. I am compelled to go to a certain number of rehearsals, and to combine this with the freedom of mind necessary for the writing

of a long novel is not what you might call easy. I have never attempted to do it before, and I should have said that it was impossible. It is not impossible. The rehearsals are going well. I am going to hear Schnabel tonight with Tania and afterwards to supper with him at her house. I regret being up late, but I could not refuse this invitation.

Your tranquil uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 27.1.30.

I am going to hear Schnabel again tomorrow night—Mozart pf. quartet and Brahms pf. quintet. It is the latter that I am particularly anxious to hear again. I haven't heard it for years. There is also a string quartet by Schnabel himself! I go to the concert tomorrow night in order to pass the time until the Milestones "première" is over. I shall go on to the theatre before 11 when it *will* be over. The final dress rehearsal finished at 7.30 this evening. The first dress rehearsal finished last night at midnight, after which I went to the Savoy Grill for a very mild snack. After which, getting into bed at 1.35, I slept about one hour. The dress rehearsals were both very satisfactory indeed. They say that good d.r's mean bad first nights, but I regard this as a mere superstition, and I take no notice of it. Anyhow the first night house is sold out, and Knoblock has had to *buy* six seats for his friends. For myself I would not buy seats for any first night of my own. Nor do I ever want friends to go to one of my first nights. I, detesting the stage and especially rehearsals, am both tired and bored. There are people to supper here after the show: dangerous, *I* think! Supposing the 1st night falls flat! It may. The production I should say is at least as good as the original production, and it may be better. I have rather forgotten. If I can sleep 6 hours tonight and 6 hours tomorrow night, I shan't care. My novel is progressing very slowly at this critical period.

Your surviving uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 4.2.30.

I am very busy. I wrote 2,000 words of my accursed novel yesterday and 1,400 words on Sunday. We wasted Sunday-night in seeing a rotten Stage Society play entitled "47." Thank God it only lasted 104 minutes, though it did burst up the evening. At present I am dining out nightly. Last night at dinner I saw Lady Oxford again. I had a great time with her at the Æolian Hall, sitting next her. The quartette was appalling and lasted 50 minutes. She writhed under it and at the end asked me what I thought of it. I said: "There's only one word—'bloody'." She roared and passed it along the row to her son and others. Dame Ethel Smyth sat in front of us. She was far worse. She said to me: "If this goes on much longer I shall be taken short." In short, a lively evening. I can't write any more now.

Your still not-dressed uncle.
(11 a.m.)

75 *Cadogan Square.* 11.2.30.

Henderson has left "The Nation" in order to join Ramsay Macdonald's "Advisory Council," on which he will be very good. I know nothing about the decease of "The Realist" beyond the mere fact of it. I saved it from death in November by diplomacies, but some time ago I felt sure that it could not possibly survive. "Nine to Six" is decidedly a play worth seeing. I saw it last night with Marjorie Gordon. The house was full. The Criterion (Milestones) was *not* full last night. Nor Saturday night. The Saturday matinée was packed. The theatre people are still absolutely sure that the play will be a great success. But I am not. I know what theatre people are. I was against it being done at all. But of course when the decision was once taken I ceased to be Jeremiah, and I must say that in the first ten days I became *much* more cheerful about its prospects; and I am still not uncheerful. However, the success of such a play at this period would to me be something in the nature of a miraculous draught of theatre-goers. The worst news is that

I have done over 100,000 words of my novel, and have been forced to the conclusion that the dashed thing is *not yet half done.* This, believe me, is terrible. Last week I did a very good week's work on it. I took a holiday yesterday, needing the same, after working all Sunday and every Sunday for weeks past. I hope to resume the battle today, though I slept but ill last night. This evening I go with Tania to Schnabel's recital. She is taking me and giving me dinner. Which is something.

Your fighting uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 25.2.30.

No letter from you yesterday. None today. I hope that no one is ill, dead or missing. We are having rather a strenuous time. I think I have been out every night, or have had people here (except Sunday). Also there has been a great migration and incoming of domestics. 3 left yesterday. 2 came yesterday, and 1 comes on Saturday. How long the new regime will last God alone knoweth. I have now written 110,000 words of my novel, and have about 100,000 words to do. This fact is what chiefly interests me. There is a slump in the theatre world. I can't write any more; but I desire to hear from thee. I may see you tomorrow night.

Your attendant uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 4.3.30.

I dined at Diana Cooper's last night. Never been to her Gower Street house before. It is fine. They have a complete house. Next door is a block of flats (converted). They have knocked a hole through the wall and added one of the flats to their house. An ingenious scheme. The house looks beautiful. But this is curious: Duff Cooper doesn't smoke ∴ there were no cigars: which pained me, not because I can't do without cigars, but because I disliked the argument. Yet Duff is a most delightful man. However, I am dining with the Duke of

Marlborough on Thursday, and I hope that things will be better there. I have known him for 12 years: but at the Club last Thursday we became more intimate and he requested me to dinner. I go out every night unless I have a party here. I have never been able to stand solitary evenings: but I adore solitude during the day. I have now written 119,000 words, of you know what. If I hadn't been so infernally busy I should have gone to Manchester to see more Cochran rehearsals. "Milestones" is still on the fence. I agree about the Brahms. I am now proclaiming that that was the finest concert I ever heard. But the programme-notes! Did you read them? I told Sam Courtauld that something ought to be done about them. He said: "Don't tell me. I know. The writer of them is a very nice man!" Sunday we dined at the Colefaxs and saw the Ian Hamiltons again. Their ages united must reach about 140, but they are as young as you two, and tremendously interested in all new things. Our new servants are now all installed. But when I wanted a bath last night (1.10 a.m.) the water was cold. This annoys Fred more than it annoys even me. His views on women (or rather girls) are gradually being soured. Wells and Shaw are coming to lunch on Friday. The top of the house has been painted and papered. We still have no idea where we shall move to at the end of the year. The cost of the entire operation will be fantastic. Mrs. Thomas Hardy came for tea on Sunday. She is a very lively piece. She wants a flat in the Adelphi and we think we have found one for her. Cedric Beardmore's novel is good. It *may* even be published, of tender years though he is. Going to the 1st night of "Lady with Camellias" tomorrow night with Mr. Tayler, who has been away lecturing on Scottish history in Scotland. He loves to do it. Did you see the exposure of Rothermere methods in the penultimate column of today's "Times" leader page? Magnificently funny.

Your paternal uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 11.3.30.

Nobody wants to defeat the Labour Party at present, because nobody wants an election at present, because people are afraid

that Labour might get in again. I have not heard of an increased Income tax; only of a lowering of the figure at which super tax is to begin. The Duke of Marlborough is the head of the Churchill family and the grand grand grand grandson of the greatest soldier in English history, to whom a grateful country presented Blenheim. Also he is a very nice, ignorant chap, and an ardent Roman Catholic. That is about all I know of him. Impossible for me to go to Manchester. Too busy. I am still toiling and moiling over my novel. I must have a look at the new I.C.I. building. I wish the architecture was better. Frank Baines seems to be quite an agreeable person when I meet him, but to my mind not much of an architect. We went to the famous "Box Office" dinner at the Savoy, Sunday. 640 people chattering and munching in 1 room at 1 time. Row terrific! It exhausted me. Leverton, the Haymarket Box Office Manager, was the best speaker. He is said to have been at the Haymarket for 50 years. I doubt that. But I have personally known him there for 30 years. His hair is a beautiful brown, and at the end of the speeches he sang and played comic songs very well. Varied servant troubles in this abode. Saturday morning I had to tell a kitchenmaid, who had almost certainly pinched £1 from one housemaid, and a pair of stockings from another housemaid, to go at once, under threat of police. It cost a pang, because kitchenmaids are as rare as emeralds. The 2 top floors of the house are now nearly re-decorated. Everything has been upset. The latest notion is to take 2 flats at Chiltern Court. They are Underground property, and therefore, belonging to the traffic combine, ought to be better than the ordinary. But I fear the rooms will be too small. I pay a visit of inspection tomorrow probably. I suppose I haven't written to you since the Marlborough dinner. It was great fun. Enormous house. 22 covers at dinner. Soup and fish off silver plate. The Duchess (Bostonian and Parisian) collects French pictures. She said I was the first person who had shown *any* interest in them. I fastened on a certain superb picture, and asked the Duke whose it was. He said: "A Van Gogh." I said it wasn't. He said it surely was. He fetched the Duchess. "This is by Van Gogh, isn't it?" he asked her. She said it wasn't. It was obviously a Cézanne. And so on. I

enjoyed myself talking to her; but the bulk of the 20 guests seemed to me to have no interest whatever except sexual. I mean there were a few beautiful creatures. Well, that's all.

Your migratory uncle.

75. *Cadogan Square.* 18.3.30.

I regret your greatest cold in Great Britain. Perhaps you might be inoculated for colds! I never have a cold—or perhaps one every 3 or 4 years—but I have a fair number of chills. I have never been inoculated, and needn't be. Chills are perhaps more dangerous than colds. I am not going to buy any more Empire furniture. But I am going to sell some. When we move, there will be much less Empire stuff in the domestic nest. I propose to have for myself a purely *modern* study, designed by McKnight Kauffer. A change will be as good as a rest. We have an eye upon a sequence of 2 flats at Chiltern Court, over Baker St. Station, or rather by the side of it. This block of flats contains the best flats we have seen. Nearly as good practical arrangements as in your house! They are sworn to be sound proof and they have the advantage of being within 3 minutes of Regent's Park. Wells has taken a flat there; so have the Kauffers, and I hear that Shaw is 'thinking.' When I arrived there the other day the architect, the estate agent, and 2 underlings were all waiting on the pavement to receive me. So to clear the solemn atmosphere I had to make a few jokes. The 2 flats together are about as long as a street. The rent would almost pay the interest on the National Debt. I have done nothing but work. This week I shall finish the 2nd part of my novel. 140,000 words in all. There are four parts, but the other 2 will be shorter. Still, even so, the book will be longer than the "O.W. Tale." I have now worked daily, including Sundays, for 23 days. This is possibly more than you can say. In fact your life seems to me to be chiefly holidays and travelling. I know not how you do it. Health good.

Your scribbling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 25.3.30.

Still very busy. Hence typewriting. I have now written 140,000 words of my novel and it is rather more than half done! This week I am reading it through, so far. We have the painters in the house. They are gradually creeping down from the top storeys but so far they have missed the bedroom storey. I shall not let them do my study until I have finished my novel. In a few days we shall know whether or not we are going to Baker Street to live. I have seen the flat again, and I like it still more. For one thing it has three bathrooms, and for another all the floors are parquet, and for another I shall have a large bedroom and a large study. My *Journal* in "The Daily Mail" has made quite a stir, in spite of the fact that you have not read it. There does not seem to be any news, except that I am going to bed late and getting up early. It appears to suit me. I had an evening at home by myself on Saturday, and did a certain amount of reading. Which reminds me that I hope that you do a certain amount of reading. I never hear of it, though.

Your revising uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 1.4.30.

Strange form of insanity, the Head of the River race! When I read of it in the paper, I simply didn't believe it. I am *not* brimming over with new plans for the remainder of my novel. I have revised 140,000 words, and still have about 90,000 to do, I think. Also I have brought my dictionary of the characters up to date. There are 68 characters up to date. There will be more. The chief phenomenon is the painters in the house. They have now got down to the dining room. I eat in the hall—when I do eat at home. What with painters, and new servants, this organism is not exactly normal. However, we aren't entertaining: that's something. It is easier to be entertained: also cheaper. I was at Ciro's last night. Very quiet. Savoy also: very quiet. I'm going to the Pavilion tomorrow night; also to bed. I've been smoking too much: head-ache. Nevertheless, I go on smoking too much. Weak.

Your enduring uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 8.4.30.

The painters are still very much in. The dining room ought to be finished tomorrow. We have been camping in the hall. Romantic, but draughty. You won't care frightfully for the Cochran revue, though it is better than last year's. The 2 'sets' and the costumes by Oliver Messel are of the very highest class —enchanting, and as good as anything Russian, and withal very English. Maisie is good. Ada May is not much in my line, but she has one scene with a big coloured balloon which *is* good. The man who plays drumsticks all over the kitchen furniture is astounding. He had the biggest success of the night. I could have done with him all over again. Place packed. Plenty of people I knew there. I took Mary St. John Hutchinson. I was at the Symph. Conc. last night. Weingartner. It was magnificent. I saw Robin Legge there, the Daily Telegraph musical critic. He told me he had heard last week from Eugene Goossens to the effect that Eugene is coming over at once to stay for months and write the music of our opera "Don Juan" —4 acts. The trouble is that I have not begun the libretto, and don't see how I can yet. I couldn't leave my novel. 148,000 words of that are done: but I can't finish it till June. Believe me, I am working hard at it. We may go for a 4-day motor tourlet beginning next Sunday. Business has been improving at the Cri. I am now going down to breakfast—8.45. I seem to have been up for hours.

Your hungry uncle.

Abbey Hotel, Malvern. 15.4.30.

We left yesterday morning after 75 minutes' delay owing to both Fred and Norah, the head housemaid, being ill and totally incapacitated. This is the first holiday I have had since last September, and I think that since then I have actually worked every day, including Sunday, except perhaps 2 (I can only think of 1). I bet that this almost equals your record. Fred has flu. Norah has sciatica. Both are in the hands of doctors. Saturday

night I went with Somerset Maugham and Mr. Tayler to the last Criterion performance of "Milestones." I am now thoroughly tired of this play. It reopens at the new Streatham Hill Theatre on Easter Monday. They say that at this theatre every dressing room has a bath-room. We had lunch yesterday at Maidenhead, in a hotel which is supposed to be 1st class. Yet they have roller-towels. They wanted to charge me 3s. for a bottle of Malvern. (The lunch was only 5s.). I got this reduced to 2s. Still funnier, at another provincial hotel they charge 1d. to use the W.C.! (Not that I used it.) Considering that you can see all the marvellous chapels and chantries in the Church for 6d. I thought that 1d. for W.C. was somewhat excessive. In fact I have never heard of such a thing before in a hotel. We are staying here tonight and going to cathedrals during the day. Worcester and Hereford probably. We shall end up, via Wells, at Winchester, and reach home on Saturday. I hadn't received your letter when I left home, so I don't know what was in it. Strange!

Your perambulating uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 22.4.30.

Very busy after Easter. We got back from 5 cathedrals and an Abbey on Saturday for lunch, having called on the way to see how Fred was. Fred is now very much better; but he is going away for a week. I saw him on Sunday afternoon. The upper housemaid is not yet 'about,' but the other servants have stepped wonderfully into the breach. We had no adventures during our week except wind and rain and perishing cold. I could write comic things about the hotels—all of them. But I am now getting rather tired of writing about hotels. I shall return to the charge later on. I have resumed my novel, and did 1,400 words of the same yesterday, besides lots of chores. This is about all I can tell you for the present.

Your indefatigable uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 29.4.30.

T. for t. You refer to stagnation, but I shouldn't mind a bit more of it. I am in need of it. Painters in, servants ill, arbitrations conducted by me between quarrelsome authors and publishers, articles, reading, *and* my novel, to say nothing of social engagements. Of course everything except my novel would be nothing if there weren't the novel. 160,000 words now done. End still far distant. We all need a holiday. But I *really* need one. Yet I had 6 days before Easter. Fred is coming back next Monday. He wanted to come back on Thursday, but I said No. Too soon. Nevertheless, it takes me ½ an hour a day to do for myself what Fred does, as they say, "about my person." Norah is still in bed. I am charmed to hear of the flowering of the garden. But the news renews my horror of the damnable gardening of this Square and of the garden behind the house. I have complained about it once, and I got some improvement. But of course it didn't last. I want to see you two, but I can't fix it yet. I went to "Brain" on Sunday night at the Savoy. The author called on me and begged me to go and gave me his box. Believe me, friends, it was *awful.* It gave me nervous dyspepsia for several hours. I mean its dullness did. The author is a charming, youngish fellow.

Your striving uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 5.5.30.

Grazia! Keebles were here on Thursday night. He asked after you. He thought, at your one meeting with him, that you were perhaps a shade too sure of yourself. I said everyone from the Potteries was—except me of course. "Oh, you!" said he. The Keebles have but just returned from South Africa. While Freddie conducted industrial—agricultural research, Lillah gave lectures on and readings from Euripides! Especially at Johannesburg! As regards your not sleeping. It is certainly due to indigestion. (1) Don't drink. (2) Dr. Hornibrook's exercises before going to bed. (3) Have a warm (not a hot) bath.

(4) Relax. Lie down on your back. Lay your arms and legs easily. Relax every muscle. Shut your eyes. 15 minutes. (5) Don't take *any* drug. Such is my advice unto thee. My clothes at the R.A.P.V. were the subject of quite many compliments, orally delivered to their wearer. Fred has returned. Still a bit wanky. Norah is still in bed. The painters are still here, but outside for the present. They will be here for weeks yet. I am working well. Tomorrow night I dine to meet American official journalists and the Prince of Wales at the Carlton Club. Wednesday night a ball at Mrs. Maclarens. Thursday I meet the same journalists again at Sir Roderick Jones's (head of Reuter's). I repeat that I am working well. This is all. I am going to bed. God keep you.

Your retiring uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 13.5.30.

Jeanne de Casalis was here the other night, with the Keebles and Aldous Huxley. And she began on a comparison of the standards of average life in England and France to the advantage of the latter, and the way those two demolished her in an immense survey of comparisons covering the entire world was very funny. Each of them seemed to know and have seen everything. Did I ever say that L.M.S. shares should be sold? That must have been on a general survey of Railway prospects. I have no inside information about railways, and my advice is worth naught. Still, I *did* sit next to Josiah Stamp at a little dinner not long since. His is about the most brilliant and the *fastest* brain I have met with. He certainly did not seem very bright about the L.M.S. future. Still, he told us that he had reduced the average time for reconditioning a locomotive from 3 months to 48 hours, and hoped to get it down to 46. Stamp is another man who knows everything. He telephoned me yesterday to go and lunch and meet Nicholas Murray Butler on Thursday. N.M.B. is president of Columbia Univ. I refused. And Lloyd George telephoned me yesterday asking me to lunch with N.M.B. and himself etc. at the H. of C. today. I refused. I first met N.M.B. 19 years ago. I sat next to him

on Tuesday night last at the R.D.B. dinner to American journalists (5) at the Carlton Club. The P. of Wales was at this trifling but rich dinner. I enjoyed it. I was leaving early (11 p.m.) and was just departing, hatted and coated, when 3 men, including Thomas Horder, ran after me and removed my hat and coat and brought me back to the whisky-drinkers. The P. of W. had just gone. I've had a heavy week of American journalists, but it included a late visit to the "Daily Mail" offices, which *are worth seeing*. The "Express," in their new building, will have to work hard to equal them. My novel is wearing me out.

Your flagging uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 20.5.30.

I am now busier than ever—and this is bound to be so as my novel approaches its end. I am, however, determined to have an evening with you next week. If there is any concert you would like to go to, I will take you, after dining, thereto. Although I feel as if my novel was nearly finished, it is not so. I have still about one fifth of the whole to write. But I have been working with some freedom lately, despite many distractions. This week I am out every night, and I cannot help it. And anyhow I prefer to be out than to be here alone. Not that I ever am alone in the evenings except very occasionally when I really feel like it. I doubt whether there is any news. I know there is no time.

Your simple uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 27.5.30.

Thanks for Richard's letter received this morning, and also for the rich handkerchief, which suits me well. My birthday is a very busy day, I find.

Your youngest uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 3.6.30.

The Toscanini, on Sunday, despite Albert Hall acoustics, was the greatest musical experience I have ever had. And the Q. Hall concert last night easily surpassed it. The "Enigma Variations" item was absolutely overwhelming. I saw Elgar afterwards at the Savoy Grill (which was full), and congratulated him. He said he never went to hear his own music. He said also that he wrote the thing 31 years ago, when it was called 'silly', and now people talked about its "profound psychological import" etc. He is now rather a silly and disgruntled old man. Even 8 years ago, when I last had him to dinner, I said I would never ask him again, because of his affectations. However. . . . I know naught of the map of Europe except what can be gained from looking at a simplified map, such as you see in windows of Travel Agencies. Very useful thing, these windows! When I attended the dinner given by about a dozen of us to Sir Josiah Stamp some weeks ago at the Reform Club (I sat next to him), he laid more stress than on anything on the widening abyss between wholesale and retail prices, and said that one of the first and chief things to be done was to narrow the difference. He gave the percentages, but, having no head, I have quite forgotten them. So far as I am affected by it, the London Season is now at its height. And so is my novel. But I refuse everything I can. I leave this epistle to run to the novel.

Your acrobatic uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 10.6.30.

No letter from you this morn, and God knows where you are. We have stayed at home, and I have written 5,000 words and more in the 3 days. We did drive out to Chesham Bois Sunday afternoon. Little or no traffic. Heavenly spot. It takes an hour or less each way, and we walked for about an hour. This excursion, 3 hours and 10 minutes in all, was a great success. Otherwise naught! I went with Lewis Casson last night to see "Milestones" at Hammersmith. Not a good house. I

am sick to death of seeing "Milestones." I have at last settled the terms about alterations and decorations at the new flats, and the lease will be signed tomorrow. I had some difficulty in screwing £300 out of the chemin de fer for decorations, to be spent how I liked. But I did it. On the other hand I had in decency to agree to pay for some of the special alterations that *I* wanted. I expect to finish my novel end of June. The speed of the manufacture thereof has now been quickened up. Rationalisation, they would call it at Grosvenor Road, I suppose.

Your unwhitling uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 17.6.30.

Novel going on at a great pace; but as it goes on the winning post seems to recede. When I have finished my book, I shall have the onus of all the main organisation for getting into the new flats, of which the lease is now definitely and actually and irrevocably signed. There is no news except that. Mr. Tayler and I are going to hear Ponselle in "Traviata" to morrow night. "Traviata" is a fine opera. This will be my last visit to the opera, and I think I have already paid my last seasonal visit to a concert. Tania is playing at a Music Festival at Hamburg next month, and is then going to America to play. I shouldn't be surprised if she had a success in U.S.A. and returned home more passionately interested in herself than ever. I took her to the Gate Theatre, Sabbath night; but then, I simply suggest to her that she should cease, and she ceases. I am called to the telephone. They are holding the line.

Your summoned uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 23.6.30.

Q. I can't take even an afternoon off. If it is to be published in the autumn, the complete typescript of my novel *must* be delivered by July 15th. This is the latest date. (The trouble is

America.) I have still 20,000 words to do, and 3 weeks to finish and get 25,000 typed and corrected and all complete. Instead of going to bed, I am writing this tonight so that I can be entirely free for my novel tomorrow morning. Tomorrow morning's mail I shall leave to God and Miss Nerney. I must! George Doran is giving his farewell dinner to 15 eminent authors tomorrow night, and at that I shall have to be present. If I weren't, G.D. would drop down dead. There is no news except bad of the theatrical world. I'm sorry your Wembley caprice was not a success. What a place! I drove round there a week or two ago. It was terrible. This is all. I am dead. And a coffin would fit me better than a bed. Yet tomorrow, someone will have rolled away the stone, and I shall be magically resurrected.

Your fading uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 1.7.30.

This is my supreme week. Either I shall have finished my novel on Sunday next or my death will be in the papers. I feel the strain considerably, but I am nothing if not persevering. As regards the books you can certainly have some or most of them. I think that the last story in "Brief Candles" is very good. I have not read the rest. I meant to go to Lords on Saturday, but I could not fix it anyhow, so I remained at home and worked. Ditto Sunday. Ditto every day. But believe me, I am getting exhausted. And I cannot write any more. Except to say that I am reading the new Wells' novel. I will send it to you in due course. I think it is rather good.

Your expiring uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 8.7.30.

Thanks, yours, d'hier. I must say that you do have a highly varied time. I have to repeat that *I*, with the exception of 6 days' touring, have worked 7 days a week since September

last, without exception. I finished "Imperial Palace" at 8.10 p.m. Saturday, having written 3,600 words that day. We then dined, and sat in the Square garden and got chilly. This week is very "hectic" (as they say) with 2 secretaries and me getting 243,000 words typed and corrected and sent to the publishers; with final business and other interviews before departing for holiday; with ordering things and general preparations. We leave early on Tuesday morning. I've forgotten the address. No, I never knew it. As the R.R. is too broad for the Cornish lanes, we've hired a Chrysler for the period. I fear I have no desire to see Hurley and 2,000 persons sunbathing. It must be very sinister as a spectacle. I can't write any more: confused secretaries crying for help.

Your mordant uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. *Typewritten.* 15.7.30.

I am now laid low with neuralgia, which I suppose is one of the sequelæ of writing a long novel. We ought to have gone away to Cornwall today, but we are going on Thursday instead. Atkinson went yesterday morning in the Chrysler car which seems to be a rather fine vehicle. Your books will be posted to Sark as requested. The matter with Sark is that it is so small. You can walk all over it in about half an hour. Nevertheless some of the scenery is marvellous. At the moment I am engaged, despite neuralgia, in writing a few articles in advance for the E.S. Fortunately they are very easy to do. On Sunday we went for the day to Sonning, and boated, and practised sloth there. Also we met Gilbert Frankau, whose first word was that he had lost thousands and thousands on the Stock Exchange in the recent slump. He was gloomy, but hoped for the best from his new book, which was being advertised by sandwich men outside Harrods yesterday. I went to the barber's at Harrods yesterday, and saw Gilbert there again—rather more cheerful. He is a very nice fellow. His mother was a great friend of mine. We have seen two bad plays:—"Cynara" and "The First Mrs. Fraser." On each occasion I had acute neuralgia, but my judgment on

them is sound, believe me. This is all. Except that we hope that your holiday will be fine and the passage both ways smooth.

Your pained uncle.

Lamorna, Cornwall. 22.7.30.

We had one wet day, and wet it was. The place is fine and the weather is becoming so. Fine, strange country, full of prehistoric stuff. We are here right on the sea. Good house. Good service. Clean. Agreeable to look at. And good cooking. We have 5 rooms and a bathroom, and service for £5 5s. a week, exclusive of food. We cater for ourselves and the landlady cooketh. Bathing is not rapturous, I think. Chiefly because the water is too cold. There is no bathing in the cove except at one state of the tide. There is not a single row boat in the cove, nor any craft. Constant procession of ships beyond. Walks innumerable and good. Chrysler very good. Beer—bass. Cyder—whiteway. Tea great. In September I think I'm going away for a week or so with A. E. W. Mason in his new yacht. I hear that the Marie Marguerite is at Salcombe. I've had bad neuralgia about ever since I finished my novel. But it finished its career yesterday, to the general relief. Today we had a day on a neighbouring beach. Porthcurnow. Agreeable except for N.W. fresh wind, that was not easy to shelter from. About 40 people on the beach. I am told that in 1929 even *one* was regarded as an intruder. Then we had tea in another cove. And so home at 6.30. I was forgetting,—I paddled. This is (perhaps) a preliminary to bathing tomorrow. The water is darned cold. We erected our new tent—very fine. And left it there, in the hope that it will be there tomorrow. The lanes are often very narrow, and always very curvy, and nearly always very hilly. Gradient of 1 in 5 is quite common in this primeval district. I am being idle in the grand manner.

Your Celtic uncle.

Cornwall. 29.7.30.

There is only one serious blot on this district. The proofs of my novel have begun to come in, and have to be corrected. Otherwise the district is to be highly recommended. It is practically a peninsula, which you can cross in a car in 20 minutes easily. The salvation of the peninsula is that there is no railway west of Penzance. Roads hilly (1 in 5 sometimes), but *excellent.* A few motor buses. Magnif. scenery. Various beaches for bathing. Penzance, St. Ives and Mousehole are all picturesque places. Rucks of villages and ancientness. I haven't bathed yet: water too cold. I think I may bathe in mid-August. My neuralgia is nearly gone: but it recurs after fatigue. Weather fair to fine. Yesterday was splendid. We spent most of it on Porthcurnow Beach, where we have a glowing striped tent. Plenty of shipping to watch. We move into Mrs. Shaw's house on Friday. We have a trifling dinner here tonight: Mrs. Shaw, her daughter Dod Procter (the painter) and Filson Young. And we trust all will go well! There is a hotel up the hill about the size of a box, and they say that 40 people will be staying there next week, and that 100 have been refused. Still, the district is not spoilt. This is all from yours constantly.

Your tranquil uncle.

Lamorna. *Postcard.* 30.7.30.

Your letter arrived after mine was posted. You had sent it to the house where we shan't be till Friday. I've been in that 8-knot tide. It's like travelling in a liner. Alderney is not interesting. The next day we sailed from Alderney to Ryde in the day. Pretty good. I'm not sunburnt yet—except the face a bit. I hope to bathe next week. Our dinner party last night was a considerable success. I had neuralgia again but it went off. All right this morning, except for alcoholism. The guests stayed till 11.30 which would be a shade late even for Stock's Hotel. It is a pity about the w.r. But my experience of the world has taught me the great fact that somebody is always losing something.

A. B.

While A. B. was holidaying in Cornwall, I was staying at Stock's Hotel, Sark, Channel Islands. During this holiday a wedding ring was lost.

Trewoofe, St. Buryan, Cornwall. 6.8.30.

The weather has the following ingredients here, in order of their importance: wind: sun: rain. Most of the rain happens at night; but Sunday it rained most of the day. We often picnic for lunch, and sometimes for tea. We haven't seen our striped tent for a week now. Yesterday we rode to the Lizard and picnicked, in two coves, for both lunch and tea, which latter consisted of ginger beer. The scenery is very fine, or very comfortable and beautiful, everywhere around. Not like England. In fact it's a continual surprise to see that the road notices and signs are in English. Our food has been consistently good. Drinks ditto. Last time we went out to dinner, at the Lamorna Birch's we were direfully bored. I'd sooner be up here on the hill than right down in the cove, except that the house here is too enclosed in big trees and hill sides. You can't see the sea from the house or garden. No sign here of Bank Holiday on Bank Holiday, though we did go to a little marvellous cove for lunch. I know no place in England that would suit me as well as this, but this place wouldn't do if we had to trust to hotels. One or two of the villages are unique in Celtic charm. Perhaps it's a good thing that I have to do a bit of work here, though I hate correcting proofs of the novel—it is so darned long. There is no end to it. The great news is that George Doran has left the firm of Doubleday, Doran & Co, and is joining Hearst; but what he is to do for Hearst I don't yet know. He is coming to England again this month to confer with Hearst, I must say I liked William Randolph H. Yes, I have often heard of the wonders of the Sark sea-caverns. I might see them one day. God keep you. I hear that stock markets are fairly soon to improve.

Your Celticised uncle.

Trewoofe. 12.8.30.

I think you must have had quite a good holiday, despite sunburn and sea-fog. We had a lot of sea-fog around here on Saturday and Sunday, and although every day, except 2, had considerable periods of fine, the weather has not been extravagantly satisfactory. On the beaches, in the numerous coves, it has always been warm when the sun shone. Today has been a magnif day, but with too much wind. Also I have had to work all day, finishing off the proofs of "Imperial Palace." Thank the Holy Trinity they are now finished! But I am still cluttered up with the libretto for Goossens's opera. I have had more neuralgia. It has now gone. The St. John Hutchinsons are coming tomorrow for a night: (but they are to sleep out). We have a slight dinner party tonight: Prof Alfred Sidgwick (philosophy) and his wife (the novelist) and Joan Coulson and Mrs. Beckett (who live together next door but one and are fine, and very helpful in case of sudden crises domestic or otherwise). We dine at the Dod Procter's at Newlyn on Saturday, and we dine out somewhere else on Monday, and so on. Quite a life. But always in the eventide I am very sleepy. Priestley has sent me his new booklet of 600-odd large pages. I don't think much of it, so far as I have read. And so I'm glad I didn't read "The Good Companions." Guests just arriving. Cocktails.

Your cocktail dispensing uncle.

Priestley's "new booklet" was "Angel Pavement."

Trewoofe. 19.8.30.

Thanks for yours. I could not catch today's post with my reply, because our day's picnicking had to start before I could begin. The post here leaves at 3.20. Sometimes I have to send a car to Penzance to catch the evening post there. We are rather out of the way. The tradesmen of P.Z. call for orders, but it means thinking 2 days ahead about provender. However, the contraption works. If you have had the best holiday you ever had, you can be content, despite the heavy fall in I.C.I. shares

and rubber at 4¾ a lb. We've been 8 hours in the open air this day. We went to some Cove whose name I cannot remember and even never knew. Cornish names are inconceivable to the un-Celtic mind, and they are seldom pronounced as written. The name of this village, for instance, is pronounced Trove. Why, God knows! There are about 10,000 Coves on the coast, which indeed is all coves. Sun most of the time today. One shower. Yesterday was dreadful weather till evening; the night was all stars. We went out to dinner, and I went 'on' to a party where were sundry young female authors. Terrific chatter. I enjoyed it. At the party was Norah James, author of the police-forbidden "Sleeveless Errand." A lively strapping wench. The dinner was next door but one on the left and the party next door but none on the right. I have not yet bathed, the water being still too icy. I am not dashing. On the whole this is certainly the best English holiday I have ever had, and one of the very cheapest. The nuisance is that it is now nearing its close. But I go for a week or 10 days' yachting with A. E. W. Mason on the 3rd. prox.

Your expectant uncle.

Cornwall. 27.8.30.

Thanks. Very busy. Staccato letter. I am still correcting proofs of my book, and my mail seems to increase daily in size. I know not why. We have had a very great holiday, which has done us much good; but I have had, and have still, too much to do. I am enthusiastic about Cornwall, and I counsel Cornwall to discerning persons for a holiday. No railways west of Penzance, but plenty, though not too plenty, of motor buses for the necessitous. Infinite variety of picnics and excursions. 1,000 coves. Unsurpassed coast cliff scenery. Mild climate. Weather has been acutely unsettled, but we have had a lot of sunshiny *half* days, and a few such whole days. I'm glad I have no railway shares, but every share I do possess has fallen into a more or less deep pit. I shall yacht till about 16th. Then I shall be pretty busy fixing the new flat: a complex affair.

Your hurried uncle.

Thanks for your excellent letter of today. I don't think it's a bad thing for you to sit on committees. Unless you get too cocky, this can do you nothing but good, in my opinion. Anyhow it keeps you on the map more prominently. True, the Cornish fares are terrific: that is because of the distance: which is a bit more than Euston to Stoke and back. 290-odd miles each way. I saved £12 on our two journeys by going third. First time I'd travelled 3rd for many years. Train back today very full. The only snag in 3rd is that there *are* 4 a side when the train is full against 3 a side in 1st. We had a good journey up. Unfortunately we ate American corn-cobs yesterday at lunch with the result that breezes woke me up at 2 a.m. and I couldn't go to sleep again. Add to this that I *had* to correct the last 100 pages of revised proofs of "Imperial Palace" in the train. I *just* finished them as the train entered Pad, and I worked practically throughout the entire journey. I have cleared up all my correspondence since I arrived, and I have revised the 1st act of "The Honeymoon" to bring it up to date for a production at the Everyman Theatre. It is now 9.30. I am shortly going to bed. Tomorrow I have dentist, barber, and chirop. And in the afternoon I meet McKnight Kauffer at the new flat, for decoration purposes. George Doran is dining here tomorrow night, and I shall then hear about his desertion of Doubleday, Doran & Co. for W. R. Hearst. Wednesday I am scheduled to meet A. E. W. Mason on his yacht at Weymouth, but I haven't yet heard that the yacht will reach Weymouth on time. She was coming down from Lowestoft. I have really had quite a lot of work to do on my holiday, and I now deserve, and shall take, a *holiday* for 10, 12, or 14 days. Everyone says that I look "too frightfully" well, but tired. Atkinson has put on 17 lbs in Cornwall, which appears to be about 2½ ounces a day. There's one good thing for you in Cornwall,—you can live cheaply there. I should like to see the Port of London as you saw it but do you know that there are model launches which do 90 knots, on Park Ponds (Victoria Park)? It was my barber who told me, and he is an expert. We are now dying to leave this house for the flat. Fred is

looking for a wigwam in the Chiltern region. Seven feet (linear) of books have arrived during my absence, quite apart from "Standard" books. As I am now dead, I will now close.

Your bedward uncle.

Yacht Sea Flower, Helford. 10.9.30.

Alfred Mason's yacht is 42 tons, ketch—bathroom, electric light, engine, and everything. But of course it seems small after the M. Marguerite. It is a fine seaboat (built on trawler model). Crew of three, all very agreeable. The ship is not 'kept' so well as mine was. We have seen fine yachts, and I now want a yacht very much—and shan't get what I want. We've been to Weymouth, Fowey, Falmouth and are now in the Helford River. All very excellent and fine. I am enjoying myself *immensely*. A. E. W. M. is a simply magnificent companion in every way, except that he has an imperfect sense of order and does not notice dust or brass unpolished! Food plain and good. Drinks too plenteous. Enormous conversations, largely anecdotic. He knows everybody, and I know everybody else. So the material is ample. I must now catch the post. The dinghy (with a good outboard motor—Johnson) is alongside.

Your migratory uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 18.9.30.

This is not a reply to your letter except the business part of it. I cannot possibly do as Mr. Bemrose suggests—even at my own price, which is 2s. a word.

Your returned and frightened-by-correspondence
and by flat-furnishing uncle.

I described my tour of the London Docks (mentioned above) in an article which was submitted to and turned down by several London newspapers. I then submitted the article to A. B. for his criticism and was rather confirmed in my faith in my own composition.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 23.9.30.

The article is very workmanlike and satisfactory; but a bit long for a daily, and I don't know what weekly it could suit. It isn't original enough for the highbrow weekly type. For a daily it oughtn't to exceed 800, and it seems to be about 1,300. As I see you tomorrow I needn't write now. I had a nervous time at the dentist's, though with no pain: and the general shock and continuous bleeding exhausted me throughout the evening. I am now, this morn, recovering. "The Honeymoon" was very well received last night, I hear. I've only seen 2 notices, both of them carrying footlingness to the point of excess. But what would you?

Your oncle édenté.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 30.9.30.

Thanks for thine. But I wish you would put your address on your letters. This is quite the usual thing to do. Even women do it. I can never remember your address with any certainty. I haven't yet seen any proof that Free Trade is a cause of unemployment. There is as high a percentage of unemployment in U.S.A. as here. And what about Germany? And what about Australia? Nor do I regard dumping as an *unmixed* evil. The point of view of the consumer never seems to interest these political arguers. Trade is bad throughout the world, and this gives a chance to every supporter of a method untried in this country to find the reason of unemployment here in the untriedness of that method. The arguments in favour of free trade have never yet been answered—not even by J. M. Keynes in my ear at dinner when explaining his changes of opinion! I am now getting gradually drowned in the great affair of preparing the flat for habitation. It is a heavy business, and demands endless conferences and discussions. Also the cost is fantastic. Further, I am still deeply in the dentist's parlour—curse it. Fortunately I am only working on light stuff—the libretto of "Don Juan" for Goossens's music; I have done 3 acts out of 4. My next novel is all in my head, but I shall do nothing

in the fiction line except short stories until we are in the flat, tidily. 2 first nights last week; 2 this. Coward's play is a terrific lark but without him in the chief rôle it would be *nothing*! and that is why Cochran is taking it off when Coward leaves the cast—in 3 months' time. Coward is an incomparable performer in his own plays. Without him "Private Lives" would be unendurable. I saw Coward in his dressing room after the 1st night, and I spake unto him these words only: "But of course you can act." He comprehended and laughed like anything. This is about all for today.

Your torn uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 7.10.30.

I know your birthday is soon, but I have again forgotten the exact date. Miss Nerney tells it to me about 4 times a year. I enclose now, so as to be on the safe side, cheque for £6 8s. 9d., being 5 for your auspicious birth (upon which and all future dittos may God's blessings rest!), and £1 8s. 9d. towards your theatrical expenses. Talking of money, the expenses of "getting into" the flat *affright* me. We are well aware, dear friends and constituents, that there is, or ought to be, no such thing as a pure consumer. Our objection to all political arguments that we read is that the consumer side of the producer-consumer is generally ignored in protectionist arguments, and the producer side in the contrary arguments. That is all. I am in a whirl of furnishing and dentistry. I say nothing of my ordinary work. I don't think the dentistry will be finished this week, and I'm quite sure the furnishing, egress, and ingress will not be finished this month. We are having a series of 4 evenings at home; and everyone has been full up with furnishings, patterns, cabineting, etc. No peace! No time for purposeless fooling around: which has a certain importance. My steel shelving at the flat promises well. In my study and Miss Nerney's room alone there is over 1-8th of a mile of shelves. I wish to heaven the books were arranged. This is all from your benedictory and good-desiring uncle.

A. B.

P.S. I'm too busy.

75 Cadogan Square. *Typewritten.* 14.10.30.

I do not know anything of Schnabel's Monday concert. I hear that we sup with Schnabel on Friday night, which I regret but cannot avoid. It means a late night, and I am very busy. All this week I am dérangé by the advent of Jo Davidson who insists on doing my bust in a week. This means about two hours each day out of my time. In fact I do not know where I am. All I do know is that I am not yet out of the hands of the dentist. This affair has now been going on for three weeks. This house is now in a fine mess of upholstery and disorder precedent to the exodus, which, however, will not occur for at least three weeks. Much of the flat upholstery is being done here. We seem to have something "on" every night. My health is better, which means that I am at last recovered from the holiday and the dentist. I must now close, hoping that this will find you in good form, as it leaves me at present.

Your Chinese-puzzle-living uncle.

75 Cadogan Square. 21.10.30.

I must say I was not personally very enthusiastic about the Courtauld-Sargent concert. I thought the violinist was very unsatisfactory. As for the Beethoven, I was not enamoured thereof. It seemed to me to be very odd. Each movement ended as though the movement was a complete work. No, I left the hall too calm and collected. We had to go to the Courtauld supper afterwards, and as Mr. Russell has a seat next to ours, and as ours are next to the Courtaulds', she asked him. He accepted. I like not these suppers. They mean that I am not in bed till 1 a.m. Speak not to me of Income Tax: it is a subject which embitters my whole existence. Mr. Tayler is unfortunately in his own ungodly country, Scotland, and will not be back till the end of the month. He appears to me to spend more time there than in civilisation. Henry Ford is a very quiet and shy old man, with a very smooth skin. But I think he has the deceptive mildness of a very old lady who lives in the house of her descendants and seems to be nothing at all, but really is

the autocrat of the house. Ernest Benn, who gave the lunch, said to me when I was sitting next to him towards the end, and next but one to Ford, that he could not get Ford to talk at all. He then mentioned Ford's book, "My Life and Work," Ford then listening, and assumed that I had read it. I said quite casually that I had not. Whereupon Ford at once began to talk, and kept on talking till I left! He is undoubtedly a very remarkable man, though he says little. He sees everything rather like a child (of genius). He said "People say there are no openings today. But there are more openings for young men than ever. You can't look at a single thing without seeing that it might be improved." Of course this is only half a truth. I don't know whether I told you (but I have told a lot of other people!), Ford bought 500 copies of "How to Live on 24 hours a day," to give to his friends. I've had an offer from the Book Guild of America to buy the right to take up 10,000 copies of "Imp. Pal" for its subscribers, at a special royalty. But I have refused it, as the special royalty is not good enough. The preliminaries of the removal are still actively proceeding.

Your reposing uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* 28.10.30.

There is nothing to report, except that the house is now in a worse mess than ever, and the chaos will increase. But when you see the 180 feet linear of the new flat you may have something to look at. "The Grain of Mustard Seed" is just worth seeing. On the other hand "Cheri" (Stage Society) was frightfully bad. Mrs. Courtauld's show afterwards was magnificent —and I went to bed at 2 a.m. As I have naught to say I will not multiply words.

Your très occupé uncle.

75 *Cadogan Square.* *Typewritten.* 4.11.30.

We are now in the midst of hell, and therefore I can properly excuse myself from writing letters. Yesterday I had to write a foreword for a theatrical charity programme. I read the

"Economist" racketeering article when it came out. I always read "The Economist." It is not far short of being the most interesting paper in Europe. Our present theory is that we shall sleep at the flat on Friday night, after the Courtauld concert. Anyhow I hereby tell you that our new address is 97 Chiltern Court, Clarence Gate, N.W.1. Despite the weather I had a very pleasing walk in Regent's Park on Sunday afternoon. Then I dined with Filson Young in the Savoy Grill, and we were home early. I cannot write any more now.

Your apprehensive uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 11.11.30.

Thanks for epistle. Arguments with income tax people can be spun out for years; provided you reason amiably with them. I agree with you as to Hindemith, but I don't agree with you as to the Planets. I had not heard them for numerous years, and I was tremendously disappointed with them. So was George Sampson. I can now see nothing in them except mechanical devices and a hades of a row most of the time. Mrs. Courtauld *did* attend Friday's concert, and as usual I sat next to her. She asked us to go to supper, but I was so tired and we were so bored and exhausted by the Planets that we refused and went to bed instead. Josiah Stamp talks very quickly and he is a shade too affable, but I think that he is a very remarkable man and agreeable. He talks quickly because he thinks quickly. I sat next to him at a dinner given to him at the Reform Club some months ago. At that affair he held his own against first-rate economists like Arthur Salter and J. A. Hobson. All combines have drawbacks and it is *impossible* for a cog in the enlarged machine to see the machine as a whole, or to sink, entirely, his interests in the interests of the whole. *I* wouldn't put money into Industrials unless you do it at once. The general informed opinion is that a clear hint of tariffs is bound to come soon, and then when it comes industrials will boom a bit. But they are certain to fall afterwards, because tariffs cannot possibly give the results promised. Well, we are in the flat, and have slept here 2 nights. The sleeping is all right with "Dines"

earstops. Quite all right. (But a road drill is operating in front of the building during the day. It is slowly moving across the length of the façade. This is not very good.) The last load arrives today. There are 7,000 books, and 6,000 of them are more or less in place.

Your ouvrier uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 17.11.30.

I am gradually getting the pictures hung. They *may* be finished today. If not today, tomorrow. After dinner last night I went up to Wells's wigwam. Both daughters-in-law were there; also Frank, but not Gyp. Also C. E. M. Joad, and the Williams Ellises and a Glasgow man whose name I have forgotten. Also Anne Jane Blanco White, a School of Economics girl to whom H. G. is godfather. I stayed miscellaneously yarning till midnight, when my announcement of departure broke up the party. And a good thing too. Frank and Peggy had to drive to Welwyn Garden City. I like both Marjorie and Peggy. My study is not in order, but it has a superficial air of being in order. I wrote my first article in this flat yesterday—for next Thursday. I shan't do any more actual literary composition till next Sunday. Nevertheless, I appear to be frightfully busy.

Your arranging uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* *Typewritten.* 26.11.30.

Very sorry about your tooth. I never have gas. I thought it was abolished for all except those who cannot stand novocaine. However, it is just as well you are having serious trouble now. Because otherwise you would have done as nearly all other people do, put the visit off and put it off. We regretted your absence the other night at dinner. I trust that tomorrow or the next day this household, which is in a considerable state of upset, will be more calm and customary. Also I have chosen

this moment to begin my new novel, of which I wrote the first 1,000 words yesterday afternoon. I did not finally wake up this morning until 9 o'clock, so that I am in arrear of everything and have to get level somehow.

Your turmoiled uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 27.11.30.

Your recital of misfortune is distressing. However, do you know any of our family with a good set of teeth? We pray God to give you strength. The first night ("The Man from Blankley's") at the Fortune passed off very well and enthusiastically last night. Playing good: production absolutely rotten. Play too long; ought to be cut. I think the "Times" criticism pretty fair-minded. I don't know who did it. I didn't see Morgan there. After the show there was a simply frightful gathering on the stage, with speeches from person after person standing on a chair. And they nearly all said: "The proudest moment of my life, career," etc. Frightful! It was 1.45 before I got into bed. Such is the theatre. If you join the People's Theatre (2s. 6d.) you can get stalls at 2s. 4d. each. The whole thing seems to me to be immoderately insane. But they have got 25,000 subscribers, and 25,000 half-crowns make the whole of their capital, I think. I have begun my new novel. A French author (excellent), Jacques Chardonne, whom I don't know personally, has written me to assert that "I.P." is the greatest novel of this age, and that I am one of the greatest authors of any age. This will do to go on with.

Your sturdy uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 2.12.30.

Thanks for interesting epistle. If I were you I should not leave those doubtful teeth over-long. You will save money and trouble by not doing so. It may comfort you to reflect that almost *everyone* has a lot of worry through teeth. This is why dentists are so busy. I sleep better here than I have slept

anywhere for years. We are not yet "settled in." Something is done every day, but things always remain to be done. I hesitate to estimate the cost. I've only had one or two bills yet. The affair is like a diarrhœa of money. I've just had a cable from Doran that he will arrive on the 10th. Trouble ahead there. We had a great evening the other night, with his friends the Messmore Kendalls at Claridge's. Unfortunately it continued till 2.30 a.m. However I worked all right next day. I have now fairly begun my new novel, and I toil at the same every day except Sunday (when I write my "Evening Standard" article). Time is not being lost. Tonight I spend in the sweet society of Freddie Lonsdale. Last night I was at Ethel Sands' and had a great pow-wow with Virginia Woolf. (Other guests held their breath to listen to us.) Virginia is all right. And I was at home by 11.30.

Your ceaseless uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* *Typewritten.* 9.12.30.

Pressure of business of all kinds compels me to reply dactylographically. I cannot understand why you should go to the Dominion Theatre for Maurice Chevalier. You must surely have known beforehand that it would be extremely unsatisfactory. So that I will keep my sympathy for a more deserving object. I very much doubt whether I shall go to see "Ever Green" at all. I positively shall not go to "Wonder Bar," as I will not encourage shows among the audience. I think them detestable at all times. However, you are young. I have been to two shows with Mr. Tayler (1) "Murder has been Arranged," which is a rotten play, rottenly produced and rottenly acted, and (2) "Her First Affaire," which of its kind is excellent, and excellently acted by Henry Hewitt. This is all. We were to have gone to Jo Davidson's in France before Christmas. Then we were to have gone on December 26th, and now I am not at all sure that we shall go on any date human or divine. I am proceeding with my novel at a simply terrific pace. I have already written the seventh part of it, in a fortnight. But I question whether this speed will be maintained. And, further,

I question whether the book is good enough. Still, there it is, and it will not be altered. The flat is not yet finished. I will let you know later when I can ask you again.

Your constant uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 16.12.30.

We go to Jo Davidson's on the 29th and God keep us en route, because we shan't arrive till 10.30 p.m. You may say a journey of 12 hours. Not that that is anything. I'm dining out most nights. I saw Augustine Birrell last night. He stayed later than I did, and seems as young, and he is over 80. May heaven sustain you both through Xmas.

Your philosophic uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 21.12.30.

Here is a trifle to take the sharp edge off Xmas. And God save you both, and don't get drunk. Last night's film ("Disraeli") was really, on its own plane, about the best I have witnessed. I am working. Best wishes.

Your unChristmassy uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* 23.12.30.

Thanks for thy missive. My information from Sir George Paish is that things will improve in 1932. He was right in 1928 in his predictions of what would happen in 1930. He is usually very gloomy, but has of late become much less pessimistic. I haven't seen any parcel from you. But as there are about a million parcels in this house and more arrive every hour this does not surprise me. I doubt not that I shall ultimately perceive the parcel and anyhow the thanksgivings of this community are heartily despatched to you herewith. I always keep my presents down to the smallest limit. In fact, outside the family I only give about two gifts. The family presents a field

sufficiently large for me. Miss Nerney says that this year she is giving between 40 and 50 presents. Well, what I say is, let her! My Xmas cheer is improved by the discovery that electricity here costs ¾d. a unit, against 6d. in Cadogan Square. I doubt whether lighting and heating here will cost more than £25 a year, against about £180 at 75. Further the hot water is *always* very hot. I saw the sun (red) here yesterday morning, walked out and in 10 minutes was in a thickish fog. But it has been nothing like so bad near here as at H. P. Corner and certain other places further off. Yes, I should say that Sark was well spent, and I am very glad that you have kept yourselves solvent. I doubt if I shall do as well. I say with feeling: God keep us all, knowing well that he won't. Still, I am working and sleeping better here, far better, than at 75. The dining room has been decorated. A good holiday to you both.

Your productive uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* *Correspondence card.* 23.12.30.

Ils sont arrivés. Très réussis. Gros merci. Et nos meilleurs vœux.

A. B.

97, *Chiltern Court.* 29.12.30.

In 30 minutes we set sail for Victoria. We had a quiet weekend. I've done all the work I intended to do, and a lot of miscellaneous chores. I don't think we were frightfully pleased with "Ever Green." The first part wasn't bad. The second part *was*. The Courtaulds were sitting behind us. They *hated* it, but they stuck it. I haven't seen anything else, I'm glad to say. Messieurs Cochran and Bernstein kindly and urgently invited us to the Habima players, but we shan't be there. I can't give you a French address, because nothing is sure. The above address will find me, by nosing around. Au revoir. We expect to be back 3rd week January.

Your receding uncle.

Hotel Matignon, Paris. 9.1.31.

I look at your balance sheet in a broader way than you do. What I see is that for last year your expenditure exceeded your income. So I regret to say that I don't find it very satisfactory. Of course income tax is a great nuisance. The weather also is a great nuisance, here as in England. It is very cold, and this afternoon it snowed. And we're only just emerging from flu. We haven't yet been able to go out in the evening. But tonight I think we shall attend a theatre. You don't know Jo Davidson at whose house on the Indre we stayed, so I can't talk to you about him. He is just about finishing my bust, and I shall thank God when it *is* finished. We met James Joyce yesterday. Nearly blind, and totally self-centred: a very strong personality, indeed. I should hardly like to be his wife. He looks quite boyish, but has 2 adult children, one married; and still a strong Irish accent. A parcel of books has *not* arrived from the "Standard," and therefore I can't do my proper article for next week. However, I may write a story. I must do something to keep the wolf out of the hotel. The hotel is very good—and cheap. We like it better than ever before. *Très sympathique.* I saw the outskirts of Joffre's funeral procession on Wednesday, and could write a diverting article thereon, but I am too idle.

Your French uncle.

Hotel Matignon, Paris. 14.1.31.

We lunch and dine with friends, or they with us, and we go to the theatre now every night. I have seen five things, including the big revue at the Casino de Paris, and I haven't yet seen one piece at which I was not most markedly bored. But the acting is marvellously better than London acting; it is superb. I have had the august visits of André Gide, James Joyce, and Valery Larbaud almost all at once. And now the hotel has found at last who I am. I mean the management of the hotel has found out. Which is a pity, for I have always come here disguised as E. A. B. But when celebrated persons arrive and ask for *A.* B. the cat is bound sooner or later to leap out of

the bag. It has done. Jo Davidson has finished my bust, and he is going to André Gide next. I am rather suffering from visits—but not from Gide's and Larbaud's. I don't think now that we shall really get home till Tuesday. The weather has been chiefly awful. But today is beautiful, though it won't "stay put," I feel sure. Still I don't care. We continue to like the hotel more and more. The all-conquering Cedric Beardmore is destined to some thin times in London, I fear. Yes, Melchett's last words were pathetic (if true). However, Beethoven did *not* say as he expired "I shall hear." That legend has long since been destroyed. What about my Australian Trustee Stocks? All dropped to pieces! Queensland! Still, the interest still arrives.

Your dashing uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* *Typewritten.* 26.1.31.

Thanks for your letter which I received last Tuesday on our return from Paris. I have not replied to it because from the moment of our arrival I was struck all of a heap by 'flu, and I have got up for the first time this afternoon (Saturday, I mean) for a few hours. Not a severe attack, but quite enough for my taste. I expect to be at work today. In fact, I shall be. We had a great but very exhausting time in Paris. Indeed, the "time" left me with insufficient strength to defeat the germs floating about. This is all I can write now. But no doubt I shall write again some day. Oh yes, some day I shall write.

Your convalescing uncle.

97 *Chiltern Court.* *Typewritten.* 27.1.31.

Thank you for your faithful letter. I am very glad that you are about to travel at the expense of I.C.I. I personally adore having my expenses paid. I am now still more considerably convalescent. In fact this morning I felt what is called 'a different man,' and I shall in all probability go to the Schnabel concert tonight. I managed to write an article, and to deal

with a certain amount of correspondence yesterday, but I shall not really begin to use my brain until next week. The article appearing in "The Daily Express" today I must have written more than a year ago. I had forgotten all about it. I have not read any of the other articles in the series; but I am convinced that none of them could have been very much better than mine. A pleasing thought. We trust that your cold is well and truly killed. This letter is merely an acknowledgment of yours.

Your true uncle.

The following letter is the last thing ever written by A. B. It was in shorthand in his notebook and followed a few other letters written at the same time. After this he was always in bed and unequal to any writing, gradually becoming worse until his death on 27th March 1931.

97 *Chiltern Court.* *Typewritten.* 4.2.31.

My Dear Rich,

Thanks for your letter of yesterday. Unfortunately my health is not a bit better, and I cannot do anything at all. Even to write a letter exhausts me. So I will ask you to excuse me for the present.

Loves,

Your obsolescent uncle.

A. B.

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